

Egypt says Islamists plotted coup

CAIRO (R) — Interior Minister Mohammad Abdul Halim Moussa said in remarks published on Monday that Egypt had foiled a coup plot by Muslim fundamentalists who ran opinion polls through a computer company. Cairo newspapers quoted Mr. Moussa as saying three owners of the company arrested several days ago had been part of a larger group linked to the fundamentalist Muslim Brotherhood, which is officially banned but tolerated by the government. The group had been financed from abroad and had been plotting to overthrow the government, Mr. Moussa said. He added they had been providing false information about Egypt to investment companies and human rights organisations. Security sources said that officers who raided the company's offices found two boxes containing completed questionnaires on issues such as rising prices and Islamic political movements. Mr. Moussa said the group had formed a shadow government to take over after overthrowing President Hosni Mubarak's cabinet.

Jordan Times

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More Jewish settlers move to Jerusalem

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AP) — Jewish settlers have expanded their presence in A. 4 areas of Jerusalem's Old City, moving into a building off the Via Dolorosa, by tradition the route that Christ was marched along to his crucifixion. The two-story building was occupied Sunday night by members of Ateret Cohanim, a Jewish seminary dedicated to buying up Arab properties. Witnesses said Palestinians in the surrounding Christian quarter went outside to watch but did not try to interfere. Yossi Baumol, a spokesman for Ateret Cohanim, said about a dozen members moved into the building after a judge overruled tenancy claims by Palestinian families. He said the move "went quickly." The group first moved into the place Oct. 2 but left when the court suits were filed, Mr. Baumol said. He said Ateret Cohanim acquired the building from a Jewish agent who had bought it from Arabs, adding the structure had been vacant for 10 years.

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Prince Hassan tours south

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan Sunday toured several areas in the southern regions of Jordan, Jordan Television reported. Prince Hassan was reassured on the conditions of citizens in these areas and was acquainted with the services by government departments, JTV said.

Algeria wants big OPEC cut fast

ALGIERS (R) — Algeria wants OPEC ministers in Geneva on Wednesday to agree "very extensive production cuts," with immediate effect, to reduce total output to a maximum 22.5 million barrels a day (bpd), its energy minister said on Monday. "The production platform of the organisation must not exceed 22.5 million bpd, as soon as possible, and (lasting) up to next June," Nordine Ait Laoussine told the Algerian news agency APS. OPEC member states produced 24.21 million bpd in January.

Kuwait plans AIDS tests for residents

KUWAIT (R) — Kuwait plans to make AIDS tests compulsory for the hundreds of thousands of foreigners living in the emirate, newspapers said on Monday. Those testing positive for the deadly virus would be expelled. Under draft legislation submitted to the national council, a partially elected consultative body, residence permits would only be issued to people with medical certificates stating that they do not carry the HIV virus, which causes AIDS. The council has no power to legislate and the law takes effect when the government approves it.

Mubarak, Zoubi discuss Mideast peace

CAIRO, Egypt (AP) — President Hosni Mubarak and Syria's prime minister met Monday and discussed Middle East peace negotiations. Afterwards, the Syrian, Mahmoud Zoubi, repeated to reporters his country's position that ending Arab confrontation with Israel is possible only through implementation of U.N. resolutions 242 and 338. They demand that Israel abandon the occupied Arab territories in exchange for peace.

Kuwait finance minister to visit CIS

KUWAIT (R) — Kuwait's finance minister leaves on a marathon tour of the Commonwealth of the Independent States (CIS) on Wednesday. Nasser Abdullah Al Rodhan will be heading a powerful delegation of oil, finance and religious officials during the three-week visit which will also take in China, Albania and the three Baltic republics. The delegation includes Deputy Minister of Endowments and Islamic Affairs Abdul Al Falah who is expected to meet religious officials of the predominantly Muslim Central Asian republics.

Egypt stonewalls Israel over spies

CAIRO (R) — Egypt has so far ignored Israeli requests to see evidence against two alleged spies for the Jewish state, the Israeli embassy said on Monday. "We have applied to the ministry of foreign affairs here and the prosecutor's office to get the basic information. So far we have got nothing official from the authorities," said Eli Shaked, deputy chief of Israel's mission in Cairo. Fares Subhi Masmari, 41, and his daughter Faygas, 17, were arrested last week. Diplomats said they were believed to be the first Israelis detained by Egypt on suspicion of spying since it made peace with Israel in 1979. "We know that the father and daughter are arrested here. We know from Israel that they are Israeli Arabs. And that's all we know," Mr. Shaked told Reuters.

Dead Sea level rises by 45 cms

Snowstorm Monday paralyses Jordan, fizzles out later today

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Fresh snowstorms and high winds swept Jordan and other parts of the eastern Mediterranean region Monday paralysing all businesses due to frosty roads that made movement almost impossible. According to the Meteorology Department Monday temperatures dipped to five degrees below zero in Amman turning the snow into ice and forcing the closure of all businesses, schools and government offices for a second straight day.

The low depression which was centred over Jordan has now moved to the east making way for a slight improvement in the weather conditions Tuesday.

Jordan will today remain under the remnants of the low depression with a chance for light snow especially on the highlands of the south. Frost formation and icy conditions will prevail, the department said.

According to some estimates the blizzard dumped at least 60 centimetres of snow on Amman at a time when rescue and repair workers were struggling to reopen roads and fix damages from the earlier storm. Observers said that the 1992 winter was the

bitterest in decades.

Al Bashir government hospital's director, Dr. Subeil Al Kayed warned citizens against wandering outdoors except in utmost necessity cases in view of the icy roads and the bad weather conditions.

In a statement carried by the Jordan News Agency, Petra, Dr. Kayed said that many people were admitted to his hospital for treatment suffering from broken bones as a result of slipping and falling on the icy roads.

Dr. Kayed noted that the first aid and emergency unit at Al Bashir hospital received and treated 358 cases of broken bones and other illnesses in the 24 hours up to noon Monday. He said that while the hospital was being alerted to deal with any emergency, people are called on to stay indoors to avoid any mishaps.

As teams from the Civil Defence and the Ministry of Public Works were struggling to open the roads, the director of the Civil Aviation Authority, Mr. Ahmad Jweiber, announced that the Queen Alia International Airport was open for normal flights.

But Mr. Jweiber said that in some cases flights were rescheduled in view of the fact that travellers were not able to arrive in time due to the snow on the highways.

An aircraft from the United Arab Emirates heading for Damascus with 77 passengers on board had to make an emergency landing at the Queen Alia Airport Sunday in view of the weather conditions over Syria, said Mr. Jweiber.

He said that the passengers had been hosted at the Gateway Hotel near the Airport, until weather conditions improve and the Damascus international airport opens for normal flight again.

Reports coming in from other parts of Jordan Monday said that the southern regions including Karak, Tafleh, Maan and Shobak were facing a strong blizzard Monday with Civil Defence personnel and public works teams struggling to reopen roads and offer help to people.

The reports from Karak, Tafleh, Maan said many cases of injured people were carried to hospital for emergency treatment.

In Zarqa, the government hospital there announced Monday that 133 people were treated for broken bones and fire burns in the past 24 hours up to Monday noon.

The Public Security Department said that most of the roads in the south were blocked by snow, while the bridges across the

River Jordan will remain closed due to the high level of water running into the river.

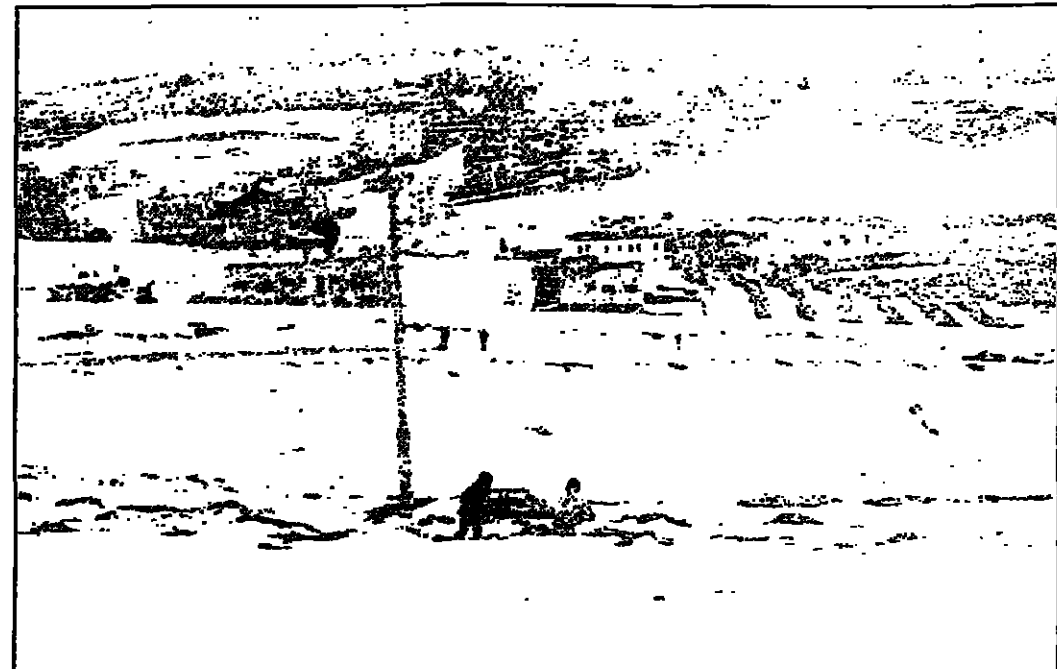
Jordan Valley Authority (JVA) Secretary General Abdul Aziz Wishah told Jordan Television Monday that the great amounts of fresh water flowing into the King Talal Dam have brought about deep changes to the quality of the accumulated water there.

Analysis has shown that the water gathered in the dam is one hundred per cent beneficial for irrigation as its salinity is almost minimal by international standards, Dr. Wishah said.

Furthermore, the underground water reserves have been replenished since great amount of rain water had fallen on Ajloun, Salt, Amman, Karak, Tafleh and Shobak, where underground water aquifers can be fed.

Dr. Wishah expected the underground reserves to be high this winter season with beneficial results for various domestic, industrial and agricultural purposes. Referring to the rise in the level of the Dead Sea, Dr. Wishah said that the Dead Sea level has now risen by 45 centimetres compared with readings taken in December.

He said that the Arab Potash Company (APC) had reported the great rise, noting that this was



The snow that blanketed Jordan in the last two days had turned into ice Monday morning bringing to halt life in most parts of the country. The snowstorm is expected to fizzle out gradually as of this afternoon (photo by Youssef Al 'Allan)

expected as a result of the torrential rains and the melting snow.

APC Director General Ali Ensour said that the rise in the level of the Dead Sea was beneficial for the APC operations. The APC can now easily pump sea

water into its own dams which rise at least 10 metres above the Dead Sea level.

According to Mr. Ensour, the Dead Sea was falling in level by centimetres annually due to the drought in the past years, but it

rise will now help the process of stationing pumps to secure water for the dams needed for APC's operations. Constant changing of the position of the pumps on the shores of the Dead Sea, he added, was a costly operation.

Iraq tells Bush to concentrate on selling cars to Japanese

BAGHDAD (R) — Iraq said on Monday that U.S. President George Bush was one of history's most notorious butchers and should stick to selling cars to Japan instead of plotting to overthrow President Saddam Hussein.

A government spokesman said the American president's declared desire to see President Saddam overthrown was an attempt to divert U.S. public opinion away from the "ailing American economy."

In remarks carried on the front pages of Iraqi newspapers, the information ministry spokesman advised Mr. Bush to "concentrate his efforts on succeeding in his new job as salesman of cars and spare parts to Japan."

Mr. Bush's trade visit to Japan in January, during which he collapsed at a state banquet, was ridiculed at the time by the Iraqi media which described him as a beggar seeking alms from Tokyo's economic giants.

The spokesman advised the American president to take lessons from U.S. car salesmen to turn the economy around "in-

stead of falling under the illusion he has, as well as his agents in the region, that they can interfere in Iraq's internal affairs."

The reference to "agents" was clearly to U.S. Gulf war ally Saudi Arabia, where U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) Director Robert Gates is reported to be holding talks on ways of weakening President Saddam's 13-year grip on power.

The spokesman said Mr. Bush was "the third most notorious butcher in history" after the Roman tyrant Nero and Hulein, a marauding 13th century invader who came from central Asia to terrorise Iraq.

The spokesman was echoing a widespread feeling in official Iraqi circles that Mr. Bush might try a strike of some kind against President Saddam to boost his low standing in U.S. public opinion polls in election year.

Bush administration officials said on Friday that the United States was stepping up its efforts to remove President Saddam and that the Iraqi president's standing in Iraq was being weakened by a trade embargo in force since

Baghdad invaded Kuwait in August 1990.

The spokesman said reports that the U.S. administration was preparing a plot against President Saddam followed the failure of "acts of sabotage and treason" which followed the end of the Gulf war in February last year.

This was a reference to uprisings by southern Shiite Muslims and northern Kurds which collapsed when Iraq's regrouped armed forces rounded on the rebels.

Meanwhile, Iraq denied having a secret weapons programme and blamed the United States for a U.N. Security Council decision to retain economic sanctions.

In the first official reaction from Baghdad, Foreign Minister Ahmad Hussein Al Samaraei said the Feb. 5 decision "had no legal or logical basis" and was based on the "hostile intentions" of one unnamed Security Council member.

This was clearly a reference to the United States, which led moves to clamp a trade embargo on Iraq in August 1990 to punish its invasion of Kuwait.

Egypt tells Sudan to distance itself from Muslim radicals

CAIRO (R) — Egypt urged Sudan on Monday to distance itself from Muslim fundamentalist groups, explain its close links with Iran and resolve a dispute over oil exploration in a border area.

An official source said President Hosni Mubarak made the points during two hours of talks in Cairo on Monday with Major-General Al Zubeir Mohammad Saleh, deputy chairman of Sudan's ruling Revolutionary Command Council (RCC).

Egyptian sources and Western diplomats say Cairo and its allies in the West are demanding that the Sudanese government distance itself from Hassan Tourabi, leader of Sudan's officially dissolved National Islamic Front (NIF).

Mr. Tourabi has played a powerful role under various rulers in Sudan for a dozen years and one diplomat described him as "the power behind the throne, or the puppet master." Intelligence sources believe Sudan's leader Omar Hassan Al Bashir was once one of his followers.

Pro-Egyptian diplomats say Mr. Tourabi, backed by Iran, finances and trains North African Muslim groups in Sudan and accuse him of inciting violent

clashes last year in Algeria and Tunisia between government troops and Muslim fundamentalists.

The press attache at the Sudanese embassy in Cairo, Salah Ibrahim, defended Khartoum's "Islamic direction" and said Mr. Tourabi had no official role in government.

Gen. Saleh, Sudan's second-in-command, made a brief statement after his talks with Mr. Mubarak but reporters at the Egyptian presidency were not allowed to ask him questions.

He said the two sides discussed issues which had recently overshadowed relations between the two neighbours "and reached crucial points to correct Sudanese-Egyptian ties."

When Gen. Saleh arrived in Cairo on Sunday, he rejected accusations that Sudan trained extremists. "The aim of these charges is to damage Sudan's reputation and stability and tamper with the freedom of its independent will," he said.

A blossoming friendship between Sudan and Iran, sealed when Iranian President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani visited Khartoum in December, has heightened Egyptian and Western concern.

The official source said Mr. Mubarak asked Gen. Saleh a number of questions about the relationship.

The Sudanese press attache said Sudan only turned to Iran after oil-rich Gulf Arab countries, its traditional ally Egypt and Western states all shunned it.

"We tried to break this isolation by going to other regions and forming untraditional ties," Mr. Ibrahim said. "Iran came in lately as part of this movement. It is not a direction towards conspiracy but rather an approach to fulfil interests."

The official source said Mr. Mubarak had also raised an old border dispute which flared after Sudan awarded an oil exploration concession in an area administered by Khartoum since 1956 but still claimed by Cairo as sovereign territory.

Egypt was the first country to recognise the military leadership which took power in Sudan in 1989 in a coup which toppled an elected government.

But ties quickly soured, reaching their lowest ebb when Khartoum backed Iraq after it invaded Kuwait in 1990. Egypt fought in the U.S.-led alliance which defeated Iraq.

Algeria calm after state of emergency declared

Authorities say FIS would be banned; front calls on people to mobilise

ALGIERS, Algeria (Agencies) — Security forces Monday dismantled some of their positions in Algiers as the capital responded calmly to imposition of a 12-month state of emergency aimed at quelling Muslim fundamentalist unrest.

Schools, businesses and government offices operated normally in Algiers, and the state radio reported calm in other cities, a day after the army-backed government decreed the emergency and said it would ban the fundamentalist Islamic Salvation Front (FIS).

The FIS on Monday dismissed legal steps to ban it as ineffective and called on Algerians to mobilise to defeat the state of emergency decreed by the country's presidency.

In its first communique since the interior ministry said it was taking legal steps to ban the party, the FIS said:

"The FIS is not an apparatus which can be destroyed in closing its headquarters and arresting its men, the FIS is the conscience rooted in the heart of the people."

"This conscience has been maintained and has grown to become a general mass movement, guided by the great aims of the message, piloted by the Sharia (Islamic law) and led by the people."

The statement, dated Monday 4 p.m., was signed by fugitive Abdul Razzak Rajam. One local newspaper said he had been arrested on Sunday.

The statement called on Algerians and other peoples to

"mobilise" to bring an end to the state of emergency decreed on Sunday night by Mohammad Boudiaf, head of the presidency. The FIS said the "junta of power has lost its way towards stability, confidence and state authority in choosing the 'Chilean way' to resolve the political crisis."

In its statement number 16, the FIS urged Algerians not to be discouraged or give in to weakness.

"Do not capitulate to weakness and hopelessness, the regime is going to tumble because it supports itself on blind force, has no legitimacy either from Sharia or the people," the statement said. "Continue to demand your rights... the FIS is continuing to direct your march towards political jihad (holy war)... God is with us."

A month ago before the start of an intensive crackdown, the party was on the verge of winning power in parliamentary elections.

More than 40 people were killed and an estimated 300 injured in clashes between security forces and fundamentalists last week in more than a dozen cities.

The state radio said Monday that "life has returned to normal" and reported that security forces had withdrawn from many of their positions at strategic sites in Algiers. Witnesses confirmed that several checkpoints had been dismantled.

The emergency decree was issued by the five-member high state committee Sunday evening. Later, the interior ministry said

the Salvation Front would be dissolved because of "subversive actions... that seriously threaten public order and the state's institutions."

The emergency decree empowers police and military officials to set up special detention centres, to carry out arrest and searches without observing normal legal procedures, and to try detainees before military tribunals.

All demonstrations "likely to disturb public order" are banned. Authorities also are empowered to dissolve municipal councils.

Most councils have been controlled by fundamentalists since local elections in 1990, a year after the Salvation Front and other opposition parties were legalised.

The announcement said the emergency decree was effective for one year, but could be lifted earlier.

The state radio said officials at Algiers hospitals had denied rumours that families of those killed in the recent unrest had been told to pay for return of bodies.

"Those who spread these rumours were not content with pushing innocent people to their deaths, but they wanted to torture their families further," the radio quoted a hospital director as saying.

The radio said the Salvation Front's information director, Abdul Kader Rajam, had been arrested. Most of the front's other senior leaders already were in prison.

The five-member ruling council

took power after the army forced President Chadli Benjedid to resign Jan. 11. He had indicated he was willing to share power with the fundamentalists.

The fundamentalists issued a communique Sunday appealing to soldiers and police to disobey orders to shoot at protesters. They also renewed a call for a mass protest march Friday in Algiers to demand release of jailed fundamentalist leaders and rescheduling of the parliamentary elections.

Ait Ahmed denounces

The leader of Algeria's main secular opposition party on Monday denounced the imposition of a state of emergency, saying it would trap the country in a spiral of violence and repression.

"The state of emergency will not solve the problem. Stopping the democratic process really opened the way to a cycle of confrontation and repression which is getting worse and widening all the time," Hocine Ait Ahmed of the Socialist Forces Front (FSS) told French television in a telephone interview.

The FSS emerged as Algeria's second-largest political force behind the FIS in the first round of parliamentary elections in December, beating the ruling National Liberation Front into third place.

Mr. Ait Ahmed said the protests against the scrapping of the elections went far beyond the FIS's electorate.

Olmert attacks Bush, doubts loan approved

TEL AVIV (R) — A senior cabinet minister, accusing U.S. President George Bush of deliberately provoking a confrontation, said on Monday he no longer expected Israel would receive \$10 billion in U.S. loan guarantees.

The angry attack on U.S. Middle East policy by Health Minister Ehud Olmert, a close ally of Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir and frequent spokesman for government policy, contrasted with previous efforts to play down differences.

"I am not very optimistic on the chances to agree on the loan guarantees," Mr. Olmert told visiting Jewish Americans, who were taken aback by the vehemence of his assault on the Bush administration.

Israel has asked for \$10 billion in loan guarantees to help pay for Soviet immigration but Washington is linking approval to a halt in Jewish settlement in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Mr. Olmert accused Washington of taking the side of Arab states over the occupied land and said the dispute over loan guarantees was part of a strategy by Mr. Bush to force Israel to return all Arab land occupied in the 1967 Middle East war.

Washington has proposed a land-for-peace trade in which Israel would return most of the occupied land in exchange for peace with its neighbours. Israel, refusing to return any land, has stepped up Jewish settlement to make a withdrawal impossible.

"The United States is in-

terested basically fundamentally, in turning the wheel back in other direction, in creating the necessary conditions for the eventual withdrawal from the territories," Mr. Olmert said.

"Every new settlement, no matter where, every new house is a step in the other direction and that is why it raises the rage of the president," he said.

An Israeli group monitoring the construction reported the Shamir government spent more than \$1.1 billion on construction of Jewish settlements last year — raising the number of Jewish houses there by 60 per cent.

An estimated 100,000 Jews have now been placed in heavily protected settlements among the 1.75 million Palestinians of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Only two weeks ago Mr. Olmert had said he believed Washington would give loan guarantees under terms that would allow Israel to continue its massive building programme for another three years.

But Mr. Olmert accused Mr. Bush of raising new demands to force Mr. Shamir into rejecting terms for loan guarantees. Mr. Shamir, who has always refused to return any land, is campaigning for the national elections scheduled for June 23 on a platform of peace talks but no land concessions.

The minister said Mr. Bush was pursuing an "artificial deadline" for a Middle East peace settlement at the negotiations that Washington initiated in October.

Modern politics threaten heritage of ancient Mesopotamia

By Bernd Debusmann
Reuter

BAGHDAD — Even cotton wool, a protective blanket of foam rubber and a floor covered with thick mattresses to cushion his fall could not fully protect Dudu, a survivor of some 5,000 years of turbulent history in what is now Iraq.

When Gulf war missiles slammed into the communications centre across the street from the Iraqi Museum, the building shook so badly that Dudu toppled over and hurt his back.

Dudu, a statue of a Sumerian scribe dating back to the third millennium before Christ (BC), was one of the few inhabitants of the Iraqi Museum, considered by experts one of the world's finest, on January 17, 1991, the day the Gulf war began.

Most of around 100,000 other objects at the museum had been packed into metal trunks and dispersed throughout Iraq in one of the greatest evacuations of historical treasures on record.

"We started moving things out of the museum in September," said Dr. Sabah Al Shukri, the museum's director. "By the end of the year, everything movable was out, taken to what we thought were safe places."

Only the biggest pieces were left behind: Dudu, along with the famous winged bulls of the Assyrians, one of a long line of ancient peoples who ruled between the Tigris and the Euphrates, the two rivers that gave Iraq its ancient name of Mesopotamia — land between the rivers.

"We placed thick sponge blocks around the big objects," said Mr. Al Shukri in an interview. "And we covered the floor with mattresses. But the building shook so badly, there could be no complete protection. Dudu, for example, fell over and damaged his back."

A year after the war, the Iraqi Museum still stands empty, its garden overgrown with weeds. There is no complete assessment of damage suffered by the objects that were evacuated and are now trickling back to Baghdad.

"We haven't checked all the

boxes yet, so we simply don't know. We hope damage is limited," said Mr. Shukri. "After all, this is the history of mankind, not just the history of Iraq."

While the full extent of damage to the Iraqi Museum's historical treasure trove is yet to be recorded, the effects of the allied air war against Iraq are plainly visible elsewhere.

Much of it is "collateral damage," the military euphemism for civilian losses as an inevitable side-effect of war.

In Baghdad, the bombardment inflicted collateral damage on the Abbasid Palace, an imposing building dating back to the period when Iraq was ruled by despotic caliphs and the tales of 1,001 Nights first began captivating audiences.

The palace stands near the Iraqi Ministry of Defence, which was wrecked in the opening attack of the air war. Great pieces of metal dislodged by the explosion hurled through the air and gouged holes in the roof of the Abbasid Palace.

Its force cracked the walls of the nearby Mustansiriyah School, a jewel of 14th century Islamic architecture.

But the U.S. and its allies inflicted more than just collateral damage, according to Dr. Muayad Sayeed, director general of the Department of Antiquities. "American soldiers used their bayonets for pirate excavations at the city of Ur," he told Reuters. "We know that from eyewitnesses and because bayonets leave distinctive marks in pottery damaged by them."

The 4,500-year-old city of Ur, in a part of southern Iraq occupied temporarily by U.S. forces, was the capital from which the Sumerians ruled — and reputedly the birthplace of Abraham.

By most accounts, however, Iraq's cultural heritage suffered considerably more devastation from twin uprisings against President Saddam Hussein in the north and south of Iraq than from the Gulf war.

In the chaos of the abortive revolts, entire museums were looted and Islamic shrines turned

into battlegrounds. Heavy fighting raged over the golden-domed shrines of Abbas and Hussein, sons of Ali, who was a cousin of Islam's Prophet Mohammad, in Kerbala.

The army used tanks, artillery and helicopter gunships to dislodge rebels hiding in the shrines. In nearby Nejef, the tomb of Ali was hit in pitched battles between rebels and troops.

In the violence, vandals smashed 5,000-year-old cuneiform tablets and flung them into the streets of embattled cities. Priceless libraries vanished.

Of Iraq's 18 major museums, seven were completely or partially looted. "We don't yet know exactly what is missing but we have drawn up a list of 4,000 important pieces and given it to UNESCO (the U.N. Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation)," said Mr. Al Shukri.

UNESCO passed the list of Interpol, the Paris-based international police organisation, but so far none of the stolen pieces appears to have reached the international art market.

While Iraqi experts worry about missing or damaged artifacts, there is growing concern among archaeologists here over how to preserve pieces that survived the war and the rebellions.

They say economic sanctions imposed on Iraq for its August 1990 invasion of Kuwait are making it increasingly difficult to keep historic sites and relics safe for future generations.

"Conservation work is continuous work," said Mr. Sayeed. "It's like regular medical check-ups of an elderly patient. You miss one at the patient's peril."

But the chemicals and substances used to keep ancient artifacts from decay are subject to the embargo — and Iraqi stocks are empty.

Peas for help, say the keepers of Mesopotamia's legacy, are falling on deaf ears.

"It is sad to see that the safeguarding of antiquities has been politicised," said Mr. Sayeed. "But that is what is happening."

The Elysee Palace — the residence of the French presidents

By Jean Chabrier

The Elysee Palace has not always been the residence of the French presidents.

At the beginning of the 18th century, the area was not even a part of the suburbs. It was beautifully maintained countryside, famous for raising geese. A path wound its way across it and led to the woods on Chaillot Hill. Today, this path has become rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré.

At the beginning of the 18th century, the area was not even a part of the suburbs. It was beautifully maintained countryside, famous for raising geese. A path wound its way across it and led to the woods on Chaillot Hill. Today, this path has become rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré.

The Count of Evreux, son-in-law of the financier Crozat, was charmed by the place and decided to have a residence built there. The house was designed by the architect Mollet and the count lived there from 1718 to 1735.

When he died, the mansion was bought by King Louis XV who gave it to his official mistress the Marquise de Pompadour. As she obviously lived near the king at Versailles, she had her brother the Marquis de Marigny stay there. As a clever man, the Marquis greatly contributed to extending the reputation of the district. Helped by fashion, and also by his title as superintendent of buildings, he bought up numerous pieces of land, enlarged the grounds and, in particular, became the owner of all that area which today is still covered in woods and stretches from Place de la Concorde to the Rond-Point des Champs-Élysées and is still named after him (Carré Marigny).

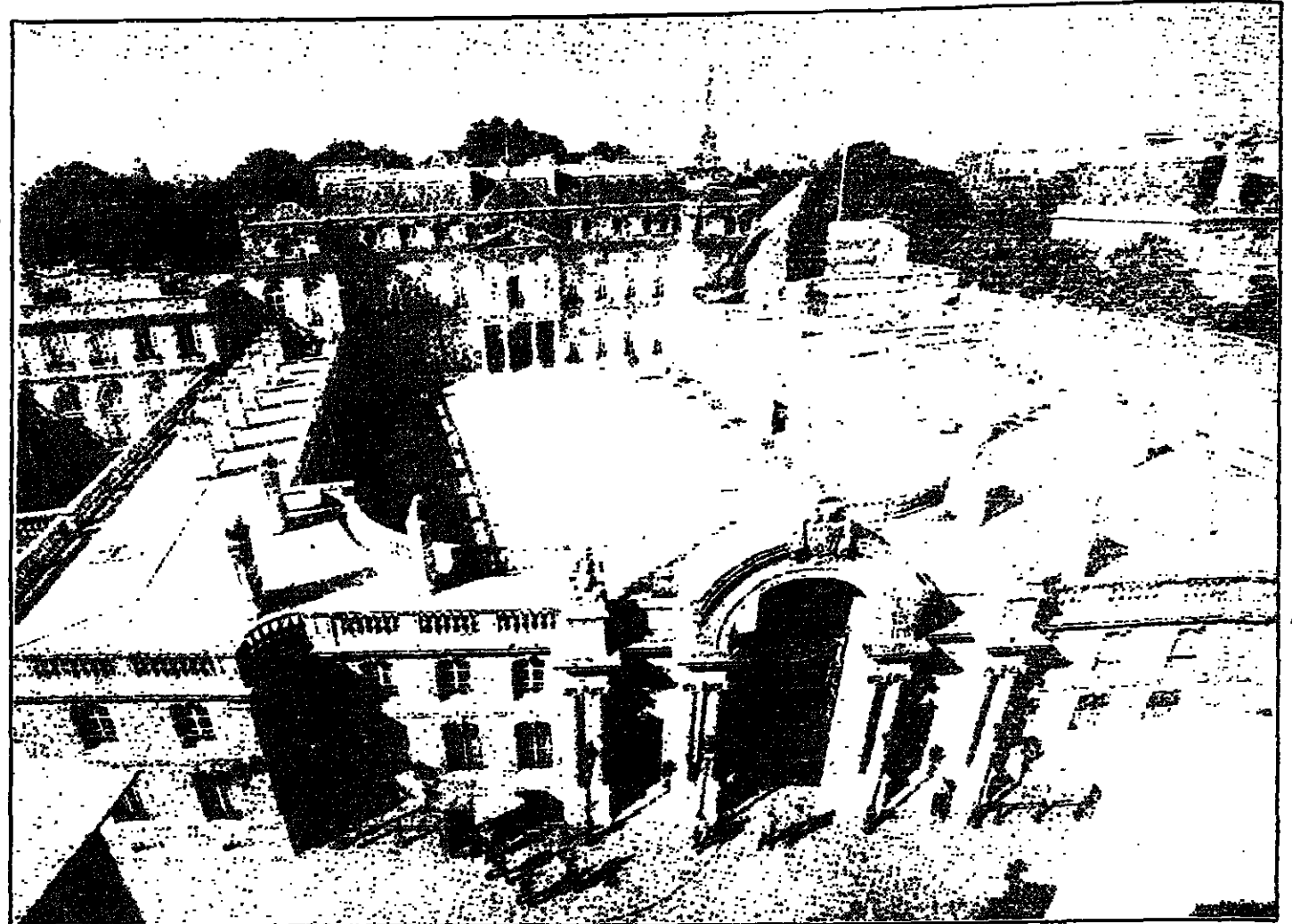
In her will, the Marquise returned the palace to the king who made it the residence of his ambassadors extraordinary and then gave it to the financier Beaulieu in 1773. The Duchess of Bourbon was its last owner before the revolution, which sequestered the palace and turned it into a leisure park and public dance area.

Emperor Napoleon 1st bought it and gave it to his sister Caroline, Murat's wife (1804) who lived there until her husband's accession to the throne of Naples.

It was then lived in by Empress Josephine after her divorce, Czar Alexander in 1814, Napoleon on his second abdication in 1815, the Duke of Wellington and finally the Duc de Berry in 1816 until his assassination.

Charming but uncomfortable

The palace was then lived in transitionally by various people until 1849 when it was taken over again by Prince Louis-Napoleon on his election as president. It was there that he prepared the coup d'état which, on Dec. 2, 1851, was to lead him to the restoration of the empire.



During the Second Empire, the palace was lent transitionally to various famous personalities or high state dignitaries. It was also used as a residence by various foreign sovereigns passing through Paris and many particularly brilliant fêtes were held there.

The building itself had been altered under the First Empire by Percier and Fontaine, and then enlarged and "modernised" by Meunier and Lacroix under the Second Empire.

In 1873, it was definitively made the residence of the French president. Thiers lived there until 1877 and then Marshal MacMahon. The former led a strictly middle-class life and his successor tried to give the place a little

more atmosphere. But all the presidents of the 3rd Republic, even though at the time their powers were very limited and most of the time their rôle was reduced to one of representation, already complained about the lack of comfort and the inconvenience of the premises.

Over the years, it became clear that the palace had been built as a residence and not as the headquarters of the state, in spite of all the improvisation and makeshift jobs which were as varied as they were astonishing. But the presidents had to make do with it as best they could.

It became even more worse when, with the 5th Republic, almost all the power lay in the

hands of the head of state. The complexity of the tasks, the importance of technologies and the increase in the number of staff made the place increasingly unsuitable for conducting the affairs of a big modern state.

General de Gaulle did not stop grumbling and did not like the Elysee Palace where he lived as little as possible. Valéry Giscard d'Estaing did his best to improve matters and had an underground nuclear fall-out shelter and control-centre built. Francois Mitterrand seems to manage as best he can.

And of course, the history of the palace teems with anecdotes. There is enough to fill a book. Besides, one has, in fact, been written — L'Actualité en France.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

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PROGRAMME TWO

18:00 Bouli
18:05 Les Tortues Ninja
18:30 Marc et Sophie
19:00 News in French
19:15 Varieties
19:30 News in Hebrew
20:00 News in Arabic
20:30 Evening classic
21:10 Colour in the Greek
22:00 News in English
22:30 G.B.H.

PRAYER TIMES

05:01 Fajr
06:19 (Sunrise) Dhuhr
11:50 Dhuhr
14:51 'Asr
17:30 Maghreb
18:39 'Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swifish, Tel: 810740
Assembly of God Church, Tel.

63271...
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590.
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 674440.
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757
Terzian Church Tel. 622366
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541.
Anglican Church Tel. 623383. Tel. 628543.
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 711331.
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261.
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751.
Armenian International Church Tel. 685326.
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 811295.
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 821624, 654932.
Church of the Nazareth Tel. 675691.

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

The depression which affected Jordan Sunday and which was centred over the Kingdom will move slowly to

the east. As a result, it will remain cold, cloudy and rainy, and snow will continue to fall on areas with an elevation of 300 metres and more. By noon, the effect of the depression will decrease gradually. Winds will be westerly moderate. In Amman, it will be cloudy and rainy at times. Winds will be southerly fresh and sea rough.

Min./Max. temp. -2/2
Aqaba 6/12
Deserts -3/3
Jordan Valley 2/7

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY
AMMAN:
Dr. Saad Ali 788285
Dr. Mohammad Abu Zaid 675480
Dr. Kayed Halaq 793522
Dr. Yahya Abdul Rahim 734072
Fire pharmacy 661912
Ferdous pharmacy 778332
Al Asma pharmacy 637055
Narouk pharmacy 623672
Al Salan pharmacy 636730

Yacoub pharmacy 644945
Shmeisani pharmacy 637660
IRBID:
Dr. Amin Abu Eida (-)
Al Shams' pharmacy (275825)
ZARQA:
Dr. Akram Haddad (-)
Khalil's pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Immediate 630341
Rescue 630341
Civil Defence Emergency 199
Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade 891228
Blood Bank 75121
Highway Police 643402
Traffic Police 896390
Public Security Department 630321
Hotel Complaints 658992
Price Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage 647467
Amman Municipality 897467
Complaints 787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121

Overseas Calls 010230
Central Amman Telephone 623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101
Jordan Television 773111
Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority 680100
Jordan Electricity Authority 815615
Electric Power 636381
RJ Flight Information 08-53200
Queen Alia Int. Airport 08-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 813812/32
Khalidi Maternity, J. Amn. 644281/6
Akil's Maternity, J. Amn. 64241/2
Jabal Amman Maternity 642362
Mallat, J. Amman 636140
Palestine, Shmeisani 664174
Shmeisani Hospital 669131
University Hospital 845845
Al-Musader Hospital 657279
The Islamic, Abdali 665127/7
Baitan, Al-Musader 771013
Al-Ahli, Abdali 664166
Baitan, Al-Musader 771013
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh 75111/26
Army, Marka 891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital 602240/50
Amal Hospital 674155

ZARQA:

Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)983323
Zarqa National Hospital (09)900560
Din Sina Hospital (09)986732
Al Hikam Modern Hospital (09)909090
IRBID:
Prince Basmal Hospital (02)725555
Greek Catholic Hospital (02)727275
Bin Al Nafes Hospital (02)377100
AQABA:
Prince Hays Hospital (03)314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (06)432005, where it should always be verified.

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)
06:00 Singapore, Kuala Lumpur (RJ)
09:30 Amman (RJ)
09:50 Moscow, Dubai (RJ)
09:50 Doha, Bahrain (RJ)

17:45 New York, Montreal (RJ)
17:55 Frankfurt, Belgrade (RJ)
19:20 Tripoli (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

19:35 Beirut (ME)
11:05 Bucharest (MS)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

07:00 Amman (RJ)
10:30 London (RJ)
10:40 Tripoli (RJ)
11:00 Vienna, Frankfurt (RJ)
11:10 Bologna, Madrid (RJ)
11:30 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
11:40 Rome, Madrid (RJ)
11:50 Geneva, Paris (RJ)
20:00 Jeddah (RJ)
20:15 Dhahran (RJ)
20:30 Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)
21:15 Larissa (RJ)
21:15 Damascus (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

18:30 Paris (AF)

06:15 Bucharest (RO)

MARKET PRICES

Upper/lower price in fils per kg
Apple (red) 700 / 500
Apple (yellow) 500 / 500
Banana 500 / 450
Banana (Muskatani) 550 / 350
Beans 700 / 600
Cabbage 180 / 120
Carrot 220 / 160
Cauliflower 300 / 250
Cucumbers (large) 540 / 500
Cucumbers (small) 250 / 200
Eggplant 650 / 350
Garlic 180 / 120
Grapefruit 300 / 400
Lemon 180 / 120
Marrow (large) 300 / 250
Marrow (small) 200 / 150
Onion (dry) 500 / 400
Onion (green) 420 / 170
Orange (big) 1000 / 800
Pepper (big) 480 / 420
Pepper (small) 400 / 250
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Sage 140 / 90
Spinach 600 / 500
Tomato 200 / 150

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Polisario says Morocco strengthening defences

ALGIERS (R) — Polisario guerrillas accused Rabat on Sunday of strengthening defences and building new ones in the Western Sahara in violation of a U.N.-brokered ceasefire which ended 16 years of war last September. In a statement in Algiers, the Polisario Front said Moroccan troops had been working on the fortifications since last Friday in a "new act of obstruction to the peace plan and a challenge to the authority of the United Nations." Morocco and the Polisario Front have accused each other of trying to sabotage a peace plan for the former Spanish colony, which is claimed by Rabat. The Polisario wants the territory to be independent.

Kuwait Air Force wants Patriot missiles

KUWAIT (R) — A special committee has recommended that Kuwait buy U.S. Patriot anti-missile missiles, Air Force Commander Brigadier Daoud Al-Ghanim told the Daily Al-Anba. Kuwait's political leadership would make the final decision, the newspaper's Monday edition quoted Mr. Ghanim as saying. He said Iraq, which conquered Kuwait in August 1990 and held it until driven out in last year's Gulf war, still had Scud missiles.

Malaysia to donate money to feed Palestinians

KUALA LUMPUR (R) — Malaysia has agreed to donate money to Palestinians to buy food, Foreign Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said on Monday. Mr. Abdullah Ahmad told reporters the request for aid was made by Farouk Kaddoumi, the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) head of foreign affairs, who is on a three-day visit. "The PLO wanted aid for its people who are short of food and we agreed. The amount of money to be donated will be worked out soon," he said. Mr. Abdullah Ahmad said they also discussed developments in the Middle East peace process in the light of talks being sponsored by the United States and Russia.

Iraqis work miracles to repair war damage — paper

BAGHDAD (R) — Baghdad's recovery from Gulf war damage was a slap in the face for the U.S. and its allies, Iraq's ruling Baath Party newspaper declared on Monday. Iraqis had worked miracles to repair the damage caused by the U.S.-led allies during the war, Al-Thawra trumpeted. "The determination to reconstruct what was destroyed by the aggressors, despite the embargo is a bright chapter in our counter-attack against the vicious enemy schemings," the paper said in an editorial. "It (reconstruction campaign) represents a painful slap on the face of all enemies who were determined to return our people to the pre-industrial age," the paper added. Scores of war-damaged bridges, power plants and factories have been repaired since the end of the Gulf war in February last year despite punitive U.N. sanctions imposed against Iraq over its invasion of Kuwait in August, 1990. "The miracles performed by our people will continue as long as faith remains in the hearts of the glorious Iraqi people," Al Thawra said.

Petty criminals to go free in Iranian amnesty

NICOSIA, CYPRUS (AP) — Iran's spiritual leader on Monday decreed an amnesty for prisoners throughout the country, but the conditional pardon included only petty criminals. Tehran Radio, monitored in Nicosia, said Ayatollah Ali Khamenei confirmed recommendations for the amnesty, made in a letter by the head of the judiciary, Ayatollah Mohammad Yazdi. The pardon came on the eve of the 13th anniversary of the 1979 Islamic Revolution, which brought the Islamic Republic to power. The pardon applied to convicts sentenced by revolutionary, public or military courts, the radio said. It called for convicts with prison sentences of one year or less, and those jailed for inability to pay fines of up to 1 million rials (\$14,200), to be set free. It also waived sentences for "punitive lashings," frequently doled out for drinking alcohol, socializing with members of the opposite sex, or violating the Islamic dress code, which in Iran calls for women to be covered head to foot in public or in the company of men not closely related to them. But the decree excluded those convicted for "drug-related crimes, armed robbery, economic sabotage, embezzlement of public funds exceeding 1 million rials, crimes against the establishment of the Islamic Republic, and those who have been sentenced twice for the same offense."

Iranian oil platform resumes operation

NICOSIA (AP) — An Iranian oil platform in the Gulf, blasted by U.S. warships during the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war, has been repaired and resumed partial operation, Tehran Radio said Monday. The broadcast, monitored in Nicosia, said the Nasr oil platform about 33 kilometres (20 miles) southwest of the island of Sirri in the Gulf had been started up, with a daily capacity of 35,000 barrels. The platform feeds off the Sirri fields. The radio quoted an unnamed Iranian oil ministry official as saying that a French company had been awarded a \$50 million contract to complete repairs. Nasr was one of two platforms attacked by U.S. warships in October 1987 in retaliation for Iran's attack on a U.S.-flagged Kuwaiti tanker.

Gulf Arab oil ministers to meet ahead of OPEC

NICOSIA (R) — Gulf Arab oil ministers will meet to coordinate oil production policy on Tuesday, a day before OPEC's price monitoring committee meets in Geneva to discuss output strategy for the second quarter, the petroleum and mineral resources minister of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) said on Sunday. The UAE News Agency WAM quoted the minister, Youssef Bin Omeir Bin Youssef, as saying the UAE would cooperate with other OPEC members to stabilise oil prices. The assistant secretary-general of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), Abdullah Al-Quwaiiz, said in remarks published on Thursday the meeting had been put off indefinitely.

JEA releases annual report outlining achievements

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Jordanian Exporters Association (JEA) Monday announced the release of its annual report detailing the main achievements of the past year and outlining plans for 1992.

The report proposed a set of solutions to overcome the dispute over the consumer tax which was imposed by the government as of the beginning of 1992, stirring discontent among industrialists. The report said that the government should exempt primary goods used for industrial processing as well as spare parts of machines from customs duty if consumer tax is to be imposed.

The association also demanded that the government should not station customs officers at the factories to ensure that all manufactured products pay consumer

taxes. It said that the government should provide facilities to exporters and reduce restrictions like financial guarantees and minimise customs formalities to help exporters boost their operations.

The association also requested that the government consult with exporters and industrialists before taking decisions concerning industry and production so as to avoid negative consequences.

The JEA is exerting strenuous efforts towards finding new markets for Jordanian products and to make Jordanian goods competitive with those from other countries, the report said. To achieve this, the association is constantly providing information on foreign market situations to Jordanian exporters, steering them towards any chance for exports, the report noted.



KING VISITS QUEEN'S TOMB — His Majesty King Hussein Monday visited the tomb of the late Queen Alia on the 15th anniversary of her death and recited verses of the Holy Koran. The late Queen died along with then Health Minister Mohammad Ali Rishir and other officials in a helicopter crash on their way back to Amman from the south. The Queen had paid inspection visits to Al Tafleh Hospital and discussed medical services. The helicopter crashed on the way back to Amman, killing all those on board.

Rafsanjani says Iran poses no threat to any country

NICOSIA (AP) — Iran's President Hashemi Rafsanjani said Monday that his country's military might was limited to defensive needs only, and that Tehran wanted nuclear technology only for peaceful purposes.

Tehran Radio, monitored in Nicosia, quoted Mr. Rafsanjani as saying that "we will continue to follow our already declared policy which limits our arsenal to defensive purposes."

After Iraq's defeat in the Gulf war, Iran has emerged as the most powerful country in the region.

The Iranians have been rapidly rearming to replenish their military might, depleted in the 1980-88 war with Iraq. The Iranian Air Force recently announced acquisition of Soviet-made Mig-29 and Chinese-manufactured F-7 fighters.

Iran's air force chief, Mansour Sattari, also disclosed for the first time Wednesday that Iran also acquired Soviet-made SU-24 fighter-bombers.

Mr. Rafsanjani, a so-called pragmatist, has improved relations with all Arab countries. But Iran's Gulf neighbours still regard it with suspicion, and have not taken up its calls for a joint security arrangement to safeguard the region.

Speaking to foreign diplomats based in Tehran, Mr. Rafsanjani said that "in principle, in our policy there is no idea of incur-

sion against another country." He said he regretted that some countries regarded Iran as a threat.

Mr. Rafsanjani added that Iran was seeking nuclear technology only for peaceful purposes.

"We and a number of other countries see ourselves as victims of a series of propaganda plays aimed at preventing us from acquiring this knowledge," he was quoted as saying.

Western intelligence reports have alleged that Iran is recruiting nuclear scientists from republics of the former Soviet Union to work on a clandestine nuclear arms programme.

Those reports have also said Iran has been on a shopping spree for weapons, including nuclear bombs, from the cash-strapped republics.

Iran has denied those reports. Mr. Rafsanjani noted that officials of the Vienna-based International Atomic Energy Agency were in Iran, "freely carrying research for their reports."

In an obvious reference to the United States, Mr. Rafsanjani said, "We cannot accept that any country in the world should have the right to be superior to others or tell them what to do."

"As regards the new world order, we believe that no-one should overstep its limit," the radio quoted Mr. Rafsanjani as saying.

Yemeni television team in Jordan for informational tour

AMMAN (J.T.) — A team from Yemen's television is in Jordan to look at means of implementing a 1990 information protocol which paved the ground for Jordanian-Yemeni cooperation in information fields.

Ali Ahmad Ishaq, director of the Radio and Television Corporation in Yemen who is heading the delegation, told the Jordan News Agency, Petra, that cooperation between the two countries dates back to the early 1970s when the radio stations in the two countries signed an agreement on an exchange of materials and programmes.

The delegation's present visit to the Kingdom is to pave the ground for the implementation of the 1990 protocol which entails exchanges of radio and television materials and news, cooperation in training personnel in technical matters and the exchange of expertise, Mr. Ishaq added.

The Yemeni team members will study the Jordanian experiment in television and radio news covering and programming so that they can benefit from them in Yemen, Mr. Ishaq noted.

During the visit, Mr. Ishaq said, he met with Ali Safadi, director general of the Jordan News Agency, Petra, and will be meeting with Jordanian officials from the television and radio stations and the Ministry of Information to open the way for the implementation of the 1990 protocol.

He said that he will be discussing with these officials joint production of television programmes covering social and cultural development and economic fields and preparation of programmes focusing on Islamic heritage.

Referring to Yemen's unity which was achieved in 1990, Mr. Ishaq said that the unity between north and south Yemen helped boost the information sector's activities. The Radio and Television Corporation in the two Yemeni regions were merged and the information policy has been unified to reflect the united country's image to the outside world, he said.

Mr. Ishaq's delegation groups top officials and technicians in the United Radio and Television Corporation in Yemen.

Conference on Europe and Mediterranean slated for April 8-12

ATHENS, Greece (AP) — Athens will host an international conference on "Europe and the Mediterranean in the New World Order" in April, Foreign Ministry Undersecretary Virginia Tsouderou said Monday.

The Athens conference is being organized by the Swiss privately-run Forum Foundation and is sponsored by the Greek Foreign Ministry. It will include participants from 42 countries.

The aim of the April 8-12

meeting is to promote contacts and dialogue between the nations of Europe and the Mediterranean basin in the light of international changes, Forum President Jean Paul Carteron told a news conference.

Invitations have also been sent to Israel and a Palestinian representative.

U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali will be among representatives of several international organizations.



Samuel Skinner

U.S. confident Iraqis will oust Saddam

WASHINGTON (R) — White House Chief of Staff Samuel Skinner said on Sunday the economic embargo of Iraq is weakening President Saddam Hussein's hold over his country and the Iraqi people will succeed in ousting their leader.

But Mr. Skinner declined to say whether the United States would assist Iraqi citizens in an uprising or pursue military intervention to depose Saddam.

"The president does not discuss what his options are, nor does he foreclose options on television," Mr. Skinner said in a television interview.

Bush administration officials said on Friday the United States is escalating its efforts to remove Saddam and that Central Intelligence Agency Director Robert Gates is touring the Middle East to press that cause.

The New York Times also reported on Sunday that President George Bush last November told Congress a coup could be supported by U.S. military action if necessary.

Mr. Bush and U.S. Secretary of State James Baker have refused to comment on heightened covert actions, though they make no secret of their desire to have Saddam gone.

Pressed on whether Mr. Bush considers military action an option, Mr. Skinner said, "well, I'm not talking about military operations here. What we're talking about is putting economic pressures on (Saddam)."

"Options are options. He has a number of options before him. But right now the embargo is working. We believe that there's a lot of pressure on him, and we believe that inevitably people in his country will take over," he said.

The United Nations imposed economic sanctions on Iraq after Saddam invaded Kuwait in August 1990.

The Iraqi leader's hold on power, despite the sanctions and a devastating military defeat when U.N. allies drove his troops from Kuwait last year, has been a thorn in Mr. Bush's side.

It has prompted speculation that Mr. Bush, low in the polls as he heads into the re-election campaign, will try again to eject Saddam.

The Washington Post reported on Sunday that the administration on Friday ordered an internal study of what steps Washington can take next time Saddam blocks U.N. efforts to inspect Iraqi nuclear weapons programmes.

It quoted administration officials as saying the study was needed to "exploit strains in the leadership there" and was ordered a few hours after Baghdad failed to give U.N. nuclear weapons inspectors swift access to a building suspected of containing documents on Iraq's nuclear weapons programme.

Israel bank chief says Russian migration could fall

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (R)

— Israel's central bank chief, preparing to visit Washington to fight for U.S. loan guarantees, said on Sunday that immigration would dwindle without them.

"The real determinant of the flow of refugees into Israel is the economic prospects... not getting the guarantees will mean higher unemployment, smaller investments and less growth," Bank of Israel Governor Jacob Frenkel told Reuters.

"In the absence of such guarantees... we will be less successful in absorbing the refugees. Then the flow of refugees will be smaller than it would have been otherwise," he said.

Israel wants the U.S. government to vouch for its repayment of \$10 billion in loans to aid one million Jews it hopes will immigrate from the former Soviet Union by the mid-1990s.

Israel has so far resisted a U.S. demand that it freeze Jewish settlement on occupied Arab land as a condition for the guarantees, which would enable it to borrow

at lower interest rates.

Mr. Frenkel, a free market advocate who has been trying to reform Israel's state-dominated economy since taking office six months ago, said Israel badly needed the loan guarantees.

Almost 400,000 immigrants from the former Soviet Union have come to Israel since the exodus began in 1989.

Unemployment in Israel is already a two-decade high of 11 per cent, with the rate topping 50 per cent among immigrants in some areas. Thousands of immigrants line up for free meals at soup kitchens and hand-outs at open air vegetable markets.

Last Friday, the Jewish Agency charged with bringing immigrants said that only 500 newcomers came in the first week of February. At that pace, this month would see the lowest number of immigrants since the exodus started.

In December 1990, a record 35,000 Soviet immigrants arrived. The rate has not reached 10,000

in any of the last six months.

Mr. Frenkel said that a joint U.S.-Israeli committee would set economic terms for the Jewish state to receive the loan guarantees when he visits Washington in the next few days.

Though the guarantees have become mostly a political issue, U.S. Secretary of State James Baker recently cast doubt over Israel's ability to repay loans underwritten by the United States.

Mr. Frenkel said the committee would lay foundations for interest and principal payments.

"It's very sensible for a state taking a financial liability to be interested in how funds are used and even more importantly in the capacity of the borrower to repay," he said.

Mr. Frenkel would not say whether Israel would be willing to pay associated costs for Washington to guarantee the loans, estimated at up to \$200 million.

Israel is the biggest recipient of U.S. aid annually at \$3 billion.

Iraqi pullout eases OPEC problems, but cuts needed

NICOSIA (AP) — Iraq's surprise pullout from talks with the United Nations on resuming oil exports has removed a "major uncertainty" for OPEC, but it will still have to slash output this spring, the Middle East Economic Survey (MEES) said Monday.

Iraq's last-minute boycott of negotiations with U.N. officials in Vienna scheduled for Feb. 5-7 means "there is now virtually zero prospect of any resumption of Iraqi oil exports during the second quarter" of 1992, the respected oil industry newsletter stressed.

Baghdad declared Feb. 4 that the talks, which began in January, were "no longer useful or productive."

Iraq has turned down a U.N. offer to ease trade sanctions imposed after the 1990 invasion of Kuwait by allowing Baghdad to sell oil worth \$1.6 billion to buy badly needed food and medicine.

Baghdad rejects a U.N. condition that 30 per cent of the proceeds go to Kuwait as war reparations. Iraq also wants to sell oil worth \$2.4 billion.

MEES, published in Nicosia, noted: "Theoretically, a new round of talks is still possible. But at the moment there are no plans for one, and with the storm flags flying, there appears to be little chance of a resumption in near future."

The weekly said that the cancellation of the planned Vienna meeting will "significantly ease" the problem of negotiating production cutbacks which OPEC ministers face when they meet in Geneva Wednesday.

But that parity is still expected to produce heated debate.

Iran and other members of the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries, seriously hit by sagging oil prices, will be pressing for production cuts to drive up prices.

They particularly want Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, who between them account for nearly half OPEC output, to make hefty production cutbacks.

Saudi Arabia is currently producing around 8.5 million barrels a day and the UAE an estimated 2.4 million barrels daily.

Some OPEC states argue that since the Saudis, particularly, hiked their output so drastically during the Gulf crisis, from 2.4 million barrels daily, they should make a corresponding large cutback.

The Saudis and other OPEC states shifted to all-out production in 1990 to make up the shortfall of around 4 million barrels a day from Kuwait and Iraq.

Saudi Arabia, the dominant OPEC partner, favours across-the-board percentage reductions by all OPEC producers, but Iraq and Kuwait, still struggling to restore its oil industry,

ESCWA meeting discusses development plan

CAIRO (R) — A United Nations regional commission which includes both Iraq and Kuwait completed two days of talks in Cairo on Sunday on a five-year economic and social development plan for the Arab Middle East.

Iraq, clearly eager to break out of the isolation which resulted from its occupation of Kuwait for seven months in 1990 and 1991, sent its planning minister to the meeting but most of the other 12 Arab countries in the group sent lesser officials.

The Iraqi and Kuwaiti representatives sat close to each other at the conference table, separated only by the Jordanian. But officials of the U.N. Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) said there were no political speeches.

ESCWA's executive secretary, Tayseer Abdul-Jaber, told Reuters the group had needed to revise its development plans to take account of the Gulf crisis, the collapse of communism, the possibility of an Arab-Israeli peace settlement and the creation of a single market in the European Community.

He said the meeting produced requests for ESCWA to put more emphasis on reconstruction in the region and on help for governments trying to carry out painful free-market reforms.

Lebanon, for which ESCWA had already worked on studies of the shattered economy and people's housing needs, had asked for more help with reconstruction plans.

The Palestinian delegation asked for greater involvement in the Israeli-occupied territories. Yemen wanted more help with administrative problems caused by unification in 1990.

Iraq had not asked for reconstruction help. "They know that we cannot undertake substantive activities in Iraq due to the sanctions," he said.

Mr. Abdul-Jaber said Bahrain and Lebanon had offered to provide a permanent headquarters for ESCWA, which used to be based in Iraq but moved temporarily to Jordan because of the Gulf crisis.

Vassiliou asks Bush to seek clarifications from Demirel

NICOSIA (AP) — President George Vassiliou has asked President Bush to seek a clear stance on the Cyprus problem from Turkish Premier Suleyman Demirel during their meeting in Washington this week, the government said Monday.

The request was made in a letter relayed to Washington over the weekend through the U.S. Ambassador Robert Lamb, government spokesman Akis Fantis told a daily news briefing.

Mr. Fantis said Cyprus also formally protested to Washington over "omissions and inaccuracies" contained in the annual State Department human rights report dealing with Turkish-occupied North Cyprus.

The report failed to address demands by Greek Cypriots for the return of some 200,000 refugees evicted from their homes in the north after the Turkish invasion.

Mr. Demirel flew to Washington Monday and was scheduled to meet Mr. Bush at the White House Tuesday.

Mr. Vassiliou complained in

his letter that Turkey had negated on promises made in August to submit concrete proposals to the United Nations for settlement on the war-torn island, Mr. Fantis said.

He added that Mr. Vassiliou thanked Mr. Bush "for his efforts to settle the Cyprus problem."

Mr. Vassiliou also stressed that Turkey showed "no signs of readiness to end the unacceptable status quo in Cyprus, despite the assurances given by Turkish President (Turgut) Ozal to President Bush last summer," Mr. Fantis said.

Cyprus has been unofficially partitioned since Turkey invaded and occupied the northern part of the island in 1974 to protect the Turkish Cypriot minority in the wake of a coup by supporters of union with Greece.

Protracted U.N.-sponsored peace talks between the Greek and Turkish Cypriot leaders have been deadlocked primarily over Ankara's insistence on recognition of the breakaway Turkish Cypriot state in the north.

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U.S. urges allies to support further world role

By Tom Heneghan
Reuter

MUNICH, Germany — United States officials, worried about a growing isolationist trend at home, have begun urging NATO allies to help convince American voters that Washington needs a continued military presence in Europe.

Vice President Dan Quayle, NATO supreme Commander General John Galvin and visiting senators made the unusual pitch for foreign intervention in this year's presidential campaign during a high-level defence conference in Munich at the weekend. Their argument echoed growing concern that "America first" campaigns could force Washington to bring home far more

troops than either it or Europe wants to see withdrawn.

"If Europe feels the U.S. commitment is important, now is the time, over the next few months, to say so more than it has been saying so," General Galvin declared, his eye fixed on the crucial primary elections between February and June.

"Mr. Quayle and fellow Republican Senator Richard Lugar also surprised European officials by linking Washington's military role worldwide to the fate of the GATT trade talks stalled by a U.S.-European Community feud over agricultural subsidies.

Arguing a tough EC line on trade would prompt Americans to rethink the need to maintain troops abroad, Mr. Quayle declared a GATT agreement this

spring "absolutely critical."

"It is critical to the security of Europe, the security of the United States and the security of Asia. We have to conclude the Uruguay round of this GATT negotiation," he said.

NEWS ANALYSIS

Mr. Lugar, reminding Europeans how little many U.S. voters cared about foreign issues, appealed directly to the EC to help stem what he called parochial views on the ascendancy in the U.S.

"If we are rebuffed too often on trade issues, if we are taken for granted, then those of us who advocate a U.S. role in the world will have problems."

"We are at a point in our history where Americans will not stay where they are not wanted," Mr. Lugar told the privately-organised Munich conference on security policy.

"The need for them to stay has to be expressed. It has not always come through loud and clear." The fate of U.S. troops levels on the continent, a link NATO Secretary General Manfred Woerner called crucial for peace even among West Europeans, emerged as the barometer to measure the influence the isolationist campaigns might have.

The Bush administration has set a target of 150,000 troops, less than half the force it had here before communism collapsed, and Mr. Galvin hoped current

withdrawals would stop near that total.

But two senators at the seminar said Congress would ask for a bigger peace dividend.

"I would say the number will come closer to 100,000 and perhaps 75,000," Senator William Cohen estimated. Senator Warren Rudman put the probable final figure at 60,000.

The campaign pitch got a mixed reception.

Mr. Woerner backed NATO's leading member on the GATT dispute, declaring: "If that question is not satisfactorily dealt with, we risk a profound crisis in the trans-Atlantic alliance."

Foreign policy experts for left-of-centre European parties, like Martin O'Neill of Britain's Labour Party or Norbert Gansel

of Germany's Social Democrats, joined Conservatives in speaking out against cutting troops down to only symbolic levels.

But Dutch Foreign Minister Hans Den van Broek, while ready to welcome even more U.S. troops in his small country, currently rejected the link American speakers made between NATO and GATT.

Walther Stuetzle, former head of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), was wary about letting the U.S. campaign overshadow the international stage.

"The political campaign in the United States is taking up a lot of energy that should be put to other problems that cannot be solved without the United States," he said.

Snow and civic sense

THE POLAR front that has affected the Middle East region over the past week is now being billed as the most severe and deadliest in decades. Jordan, in particular, yesterday witnessed some very harsh conditions as a result of the cold weather.

Snow reportedly was a metre high in the north. Water pipes froze in towns and cities across the Kingdom. Roads turned into dangerous blocks of ice. Frost damaged most, if not all, vegetable crops in the Jordan Valley. And near paralysis hit normal life.

Officials attempted to put a brave face on all of the above. The salinity in the King Talal Dam waters has gone down to internationally accepted levels for irrigation, one of them said, and underground water has been considerably replenished. The rising level of the Dead Sea, some 45 centimetres in all, is good for the potash industry, another said. Several people have lost their lives due to floods and other weather-related accidents, but not as many as in other countries like Turkey and Lebanon. And so on.

In a way, we truly have been fortunate that the fourth snowstorm this winter, which is also probably the harshest, has not wreaked more havoc or claimed more lives than it has. But, as His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan was quoted as saying in newspapers yesterday, there is need for everybody to chip in and do their share in making Jordan even less vulnerable to conditions like these. Civic sense especially is what our people need to have both as individuals and as a society.

In undertaking his tour of the south, under tough and dangerous conditions as existed on Sunday and Monday, the Crown Prince gave an example to follow by all responsible men. But in saying that the state simply could not do everything for the citizen, and that Jordanians needed to do more for themselves, His Royal Highness did not mean to declare that the concerned authorities were perfect in handling their tasks, we are sure.

Take, for instance, the Amman municipality and the Public Security Department, which respectively should have done more than send half a dozen bulldozers to clear the roads and warn people of the icy conditions on the streets. Those drivers who had to leave their homes expected from the authorities an effort to de-ice at least the main slippery roads and to see a police patrol somewhere near where they and others had accidents or nearly were killed because of their likelihood.

Civic duties and sense flow both ways between the citizen and the state. It is not a chicken and egg situation, however, when it comes to who should learn and practise them first. The state has historically done more for Jordanians than we, the people, generally like to admit. Does it not become natural for us therefore to again expect the state to take the lead where it should?

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

AL RA'I Arabic daily Monday discussed the consequences of the snowstorm that has continued in Jordan for several days and criticised those citizens who do not take precautions in advance of the winter season, thus placing extra burdens on the civil defence authorities where they turn to for help. The paper said that although there exists close cooperation among individuals and concerned organisations during storms and unusual weather conditions, little concern is given by most people to precautionary measures and the task of supplying their homes with sufficient food stocks and fuel. The paper said also that certain organisations which are required to be quite ready to deal with the consequences of such storms also showed unpreparedness in the face of the storm, thus causing a collapse of public services when they are needed most. The paper paid tribute to the repair teams working under severe weather conditions to restore electricity, telephone and other services and said that unless each and every citizen feels and acts responsibly under such conditions the country can never overcome any predicament at any time in the future.

A columnist in Al Dustour daily tackled the question of the damaged crops in Jordan as a result of the snowstorms, saying that the loss for farmers was so great that it can be only compensated by heavy government funding for farmers projects. Mohammad Daoudieh said almost 60 per cent of the olive trees, for instance, were washed away by the floods in the Tafleeh Governorate alone and the farmers' plight there is unprecedented, requiring immediate government attention. These fruit growers have spent years in growing these trees so that they might have means for their livelihood and now as they are gone, it takes years to plant such trees so that farmers and tree growers can restore the requirements for their livelihoods if they had not by then lost heart, said the writer. The farmers are already burdened with heavy loans from the banks or from the Agricultural Credit Corporation and it is quite reasonable to conclude that more debts and more loans to the farmers can only increase the burdens and make their struggles futile. The writer called on the Ministry of Agriculture and the money lending institutions in the country to offer the Jordanian farmers grants to tidy them over their present difficulties and to enable them to resume their work with new elan. He also appealed to the Federation of Jordanian Chambers of Commerce and Industry to extend a helping hand to the farmers in order to bring them new hope for the agricultural sector, the most important among the other sectors for the national economy.

Yeltsin's foreign success lays doubts to rest

By Oliver Wates
Reuter

MOSCOW — Two weeks of triumphant foreign summitry should have laid to rest any lingering doubts about Russian leader Boris Yeltsin's "presidential" qualities.

In late January his decision to skip a round of Middle East peace talks in Moscow and stand up the Japanese foreign minister had the pundits questioning his judgement.

The Moscow rumour mill went into top gear, with his alleged fondness for vodka the favourite explanation. Was this a man, Western diplomats wondered aloud, who could be trusted in a nuclear crisis?

The Tokyo Stock Market, for good measure, got into a spin about his supposedly shaky health.

Two weeks later, things look different.

"Tsar Boris," as newspapers have dubbed him, has won plaudits in Paris, Washington and the United Nations, spoken reassuringly about his fitness and even been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize.

At home he seems little touched by the growing unpopularity of his government. One daily even compared him to former U.S. leader Ronald Reagan, known as the "Teflon president" because the mud thrown at his administration failed to stick to him.

"Despite everything, people believe in their president as before," the newspaper Moskovskaya Pravda said in a front-page article on Saturday. "In all their trials and tribulations, they are ready to blame anybody except Boris Nikolayevich."

It said: "He is basically a hero and the people of Russia are not accustomed to abusing their heroes."



M. KAHIL

Concern for Mr. Yeltsin's health is natural. More than any other, he bears the future of the Commonwealth of Independent States — not to mention world disarmament — on his shoulders.

Just turned 61, he has in the past spent time in hospital because of overwork and was widely believed to have a heart condition. When he took an unscheduled day off work in the autumn, his aides said he had suffered a "pristup" — a mild heart seizure.

But on Wednesday he declared

in a television interview that his health was the least of his worries, that he played two hours of intensive tennis a week and took a cold shower daily.

"I have never had any heart trouble," he declared flatly. "It was good news for stock markets, concerned at the implications if Mr. Yeltsin could drop dead at any moment."

Mr. Yeltsin has nailed his colours to the mast of radical economic reform. But the government implementing his shock price liberalisation and privatisation programmes depends on him

alone for its authority.

His vice-president, the more conservative Alexander Rutskoi, has missed no opportunity to publicly attack the government and its programme as hasty and ill thought-out.

The powerful chairman of parliament, Ruslan Khasbulatov, has staked out a different position, criticising the reforms from a more liberal position.

The third rival for power would be first Deputy Prime Minister Gennady Burbulis, who like Mr. Yeltsin comes from Yekaterinburg (formerly Sverdlovsk) in the

Urals.

Former Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev has also returned to the public eye following his resignation in December.

In a television interview on Friday he supported the government's reformist aims though not its tactics, saying it had put the cart before the horse.

In Russia leaders are not criticised too publicly, only their ministers. Neither Mr. Gorbachev nor Mr. Rutskoi had a word to say against Mr. Yeltsin himself. "I have no disagreements with

the president," Mr. Rutskoi said, somewhat improbably, in a 10,000-word onslaught on the government in the former communist daily Pravda on Saturday.

Moskovskaya Pravda — a separate publication — suggested that the only way Mr. Yeltsin would retain his popularity amid the spiralling prices was by ditching the government.

Whatever his domestic problems, the bulky former construction engineer has won over the West. Flying visits to Britain, Canada and the United States and his more relaxed visit to France were all declared ringing successes.

In Washington he exuded power and confidence but proved to be as ardent an advocate of disarmament and East-West friendship as Mr. Gorbachev.

He came back on "George and Boris" terms with President George Bush, was taken to the Camp David retreat and put on a strong performance to an audience of U.S. businessmen.

France, eager to make up for past snubs, laid on a lavish welcome, putting Mr. Yeltsin up in the Grand Trianon pavilion at Versailles. He impressed his French hosts with his grasp of detail and even charmed members of the "white" Russian emigre community.

His commitment to radical, and unpopular, economic reform has wiped away last year's image of a populist profiting principally as the main alternative to communism.

Now the dignified and able statesman could banish the tabloid newspaper vision of boozing Boris from the backwoods.

Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev hailed Mr. Yeltsin's foreign success, telling Reuters in Paris: "No one can say any longer 'who is this?' ... Can we trust these ideas or take them seriously?"

New Hampshire voters seem to ignore Clinton woes

By Michael Posner
Reuter

WASHINGTON — A run of bad publicity seems to have done Democratic presidential front-runner Bill Clinton no harm at all in New Hampshire, where his support in the crucial February 18 primary is rising right along with his image problems.

The question for the smooth, soft-spoken Arkansas governor is how long the flow of negative allegations will go on, how many blows he can shake off and what effect they might have on New Hampshire's large slice of undecided voters.

Victory in the prestigious first-in-the-nation primary could still turn, for the Democrats, on the undecided vote.

So far, though, Mr. Clinton has not only held his New Hampshire support base but increased it. Enthusiastic crowd reactions and rising ratings in opinion polls suggest those voters accept his denial of supermarket tabloid allegations that he had a long extra-marital affair with a woman named Gennifer Flowers.

Another news report on Thursday claiming he had schemed to avoid conscription during the Vietnam war was generally ignored by crowds at events Mr. Clinton attended.

Even less public attention was stirred by yet another news report on Friday in the New York Post newspaper, whose front-page headline blared: "Clinton and BCCI." The tabloid story claimed a Clinton political fundraiser — not Mr. Clinton himself — had once brokered deals for the outlawed Bank of Credit and Commerce International.

The American research group, which does daily polling on New Hampshire primary trends, said surveys concluded on Thursday



Bill Clinton

showed Mr. Clinton had climbed five points to 39 per cent backing. "He didn't lose any appreciable ground" even though the draft-dodger allegations had just broken, pollster Dick Bennett told Reuters.

Second in that poll with 21 per cent was Paul Tsongas, a former senator from next-door Massachusetts. Senators Tom Harkin of Iowa and Bob Kerrey of Nebraska had 11 per cent each. Former California Governor Jerry Brown was last among the five Democratic contenders with four per cent.

A similar "tracking poll" by the Gallup organisation for the Cable News Network reported

Mr. Clinton leading on Friday with 37 per cent, versus 24 per cent for runner-up Tsongas.

Even so, with no one close to a majority, most analysts say all could ride on the election-day break in the state's undecided vote — a special danger for a candidate who must deal daily with accumulating character assaults.

Although one poll shows that the undecided column has declined by half from 28 per cent to 14 per cent in the last few days, that still leaves a big swing factor.

Analysts believe that some of those voters who tell pollsters they have decided on a candidate may change their minds before February 18.

The New Hampshire primary carries outsized importance in the nomination process because it is the first major test of voter preference in each party. Iowa holds internal party votes called "caucuses" a week earlier but victory there is conceded to Mr. Harkin, the home-state senator.

Much rides on how the Clinton "character issue" plays in New Hampshire and other early contests.

"It's an issue that will be sorted out by the voters in New Hampshire and other primaries," said Ginny Terzano, spokeswoman for the National Democratic Party.

How much bad news can Mr. Clinton take is unclear. Some analysts say the conscription issue, in particular, will not go away, especially if he wins the nomination at the party's convention in July and faces President George Bush in the November 3 election.

Israel searches its soul as Sabra myth dissolves

By Colleen Siegel
Reuter

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM — Israelis are embroiled in public soul-searching over a book that may finally bury the myth of the "Sabra" — the brave, sexy, left-wing and secular native-born Jew.

Right-wing politicians are crowding and lawsuits are starting to fly over allegations in a damning biography of the late Dahn Ben Amotz, the man who helped create the image cherished by Israelis.

Author Amnon Dankner has gripped the nation with his account of writer and guru Ben Amotz as a man of monstrous flaws and frequent hypocrisy. He is depicted as a victim of incest who in middle age had sex with girls as young as 12.

The biography "Dahn Ben Amotz" says leading left-wing intellectuals knew his dark secret but kept quiet. Women pimped for him and men sometimes shared his under-age lovers.

A nearly month-long public debate stirred by the book is now focusing on a deeper question unanswered in 43 years of statehood — what is an Israeli?

Mr. Dankner, a journalist friend chosen by Ben Amotz to write the biography, is facing at least two lawsuits by people mentioned in the book. Right-wing politicians are demanding a police investigation of the allegations.

Mr. Dankner told Reuters the uproar was really because his book was a "biography of Israeli society," adding: "Israeli society is in love with its lies. For instance, the concerted effort for many years to distance Jewish society from its Jewish roots, to fake here a sort of non-Jewish Sabra. This was a big lie which

Dahn represented beautifully for many years. Then there are political lies. Those who like Dahn while working for Arab rights, democracy and so on, themselves bought cheaply old Arab houses in Jaffa or the kibbutzim (collective farms), shed crocodile tears while acquiring Arab land," he said.

The one-cherished image, Mr. Dankner said, was bankrupt. But he added that religious Jewish settlers bent on annexing Arab land occupied by Israel in the 1967 Middle East war were no better.

"I don't like to become a tool in the hands of the right, which I detest, but I think the left has been too long immune from criticism, there is a sort of omerta," Mr. Dankner said, referring to the mafia code of silence.

Leading sociologist Moshe Lissak, of Hebrew University, said Mr. Dankner's bombshell was the outcome of a process begun in the 1970s.

In a country continually inundated by mass immigration — at the end of 1990 a full 38 per cent of the Jewish population was non-native born — national identity was in a constant state of flux, Mr. Lissak said.

But he said Ben Amotz and others, like war hero Moshe Dayan, succeeded for years in imposing one image on the motley peoples that are Israel Jews until the dovish Labour Party lost its preeminence to the hawkish Likud in 1977.

"There has been a rewriting of history since Likud came to power," Mr. Lissak said.

Likud wants to settle Jews on captured Arab land it regards as the biblical birthright of Jews. Labour favours handing back the

land for peace with the Arabs.

"Dankner's biography ... is a very strong blow to a certain segment of political society," Mr. Lissak said.

Ben Amotz, who died in 1989, is credited with everything from helping fashion modern Hebrew to setting Israel's taste for Arab foods such as hummus and falafel.

Born in Poland in 1924, he was sent to British-ruled Palestine by his parents at the age of 13. They stayed behind and were killed in the Nazi Holocaust. Ben Amotz joined the Palmach, the elite corps of Israel's pre-state army.

In 1950s stories and radio sketches, he gave the nation its image of youngsters pulled from the kibbutz to establish a state by blood and iron in the 1948 Middle East war.

He became a peace activist after Israeli troops massacred 49 Arabs at Kfar Kassem in 1956, the year of the Suez crisis.

Still later, Lissak said, Ben Amotz was a guru to the generation that fought in the 1967 and 1973 Middle East wars.

Yonatan Gefen, a prominent writer who knew Ben Amotz, said he gave Israelis of the 1960s and 1970s the image of being commandos armed with "Bob Dylan's harmonica."

Newspapers have had a field day, pecking their pages with reassessments of the Sabra myth since the book appeared on January 10. Maariv declared "the Sabra died in (Israel's) 1982 invasion of Lebanon." But rightwingers say simply the Sabra of the left is exhausted. The Sabra has not died," said journalist Emma Elon of the West Bank settlement of Bet El.

كنا من الامل

Morceli wins mile easily

FAIRFAX, Virginia (AP) — Algeria's Noureddine Morceli took the lead just past midway and breezed to a more than five-second victory at Sunday's Mobil 1 invitational but did not come near his promised assault on Eamonn Coghlan's nine-year-old record in the world indoor mile.

While pacesetters were set to lead him through three quarters of a mile, Morceli ran to the front just past a half-mile and won in 3:54.41, but his 60-second third quarter doomed any chance at Coghlan's 3:49.78.

"I was just trying to make the spectators happy," said Morceli, who finished 5.30 seconds ahead of Qatar's Mohammad Suleiman. Morceli's solo effort was far from the only exciting performance of the meet.

There was two-time Olympic gold medalist Jackie Joyner-Kersey coming within three hundredths of a second of her American record for the 60-metre hurdles, even though she was off-balance and oversteering because most officials mistakenly placed the hurdles at the men's mark.

Andre Cason continued his dominance of the indoor sprint scene, running 6.54 to defeat Leroy Burrell in the 60-metre dash for the second time in three days.

Tony Dees won the 60-metre hurdles in 7.53 by outleaning archrival Greg Foster, who finished in 7.54.

And Maxim Tarasov of Russia won the pole vault on his third and final attempt at 5.82 metres (19 feet-1 inch), defeating Bill

Payne and Istvan Bagyula of Hungary and George Mason University.

But the mile, with the enticement of a record attempt and a \$50,000 bonus hanging in the balance, captured the most attention.

Morceli, the 1991 indoor and outdoor world champion at 1,500 metres, trailed a yard behind Rabbit Mike Michno at the half-mile, which both runners passed in 1:55.

Michno dropped out then, having kept his promise to lead half the race at world-record pace, he was quickly replaced by John Hinton, who was supposed to tow Morceli through the three-quarter mark, but at the 900-yard point, the Algerian surged to the front.

"The second rabbit was a little bit slower than the first, so I took the lead," Morceli said.

By then, his world record attempt as going south, in part because the tight turns of the unbanked 200-metre track made it hard to maintain control.

"I was thinking about the world record, but when I got to the track the day before, I realized it would be hard," said Morceli, who already holds the indoor mark at 1,500 metres. "Not today."

Cason defeated Burrell, who was ranked first in the world at 100 metres last year, after beating him Friday at the Millrose Games in New York.

"I don't have the speed or acceleration in the middle I need right now, and quite frankly, I'm



Noureddine Morceli

not sure I want it right now," Burrell said. "Crunch time is in June."

Cason said his latest win over Burrell, like the world 60-metre record of 6.45 he set last week, is another step toward an Olympic gold medal in the 100 metres.

"That's my main objective," Cason said. "I made that my goal in the fall of 1991, and it is still what I want to do."

In other events, Danny Harris

won the 400 metres in 47.36, despite having run almost no speed work this season. Morocco's Mohammad Choumassi kicked off past former Georgetown standout John Trautman to win the 3,000 metres in 7:54.86.

Joetta Clark won the women's 800 in 2:02.83, Kenya's Paul Ereng won the men's 800 in 1:48.95, and Natasha Kaiser defeated Diane Dixon to take the women's 400 in 52.63.

Morale sinks at Real Madrid as Barcelona closes in

LONDON (R) — Morale is sinking and anxiety rising at Real Madrid, as their once seemingly impregnable lead was trimmed back further by defending champions Barcelona at the weekend.

New coach Leo Benhakker, brought in two weeks ago to lift Real's performance after a new year slump in form, watched in despair as his charges lost 2-1 to 18th-placed Real Valladolid and dropped their third point in two games since he took over.

"Valladolid showed us how to play a match based on aggression," said Benhakker after Real's third defeat of the season. "We were more enterprising, more explosive, more consistent. That's the way we wanted it. We felt we could be really dangerous."

A day later, Raymond Goethals was sour as his side drew 2-2 with lowly Sochaux. "Leave me alone, I don't want to talk," said the usually chatty coach as his side's lead narrowed to three points.

Wenger conceded that Marseille had been put under pressure by having to play their game a day after Monaco had won in a French fixture schedule typically spread over three days.

"This kind of situation can't be allowed to go on," he said. Unbeaten leaders AC Milan strengthened their grip on the Italian championship with a point in the top-of-the-table clash at home to closest rivals Juventus.

Despite Milan's failure to win after dominating the match, Juventus' inability to make an impact on their five points lead makes Milan firm favourites to win the title for the first time in four years.

Juventus coach Giovanni Trapattoni admitted that Milan deserved their position. "The distance between us remains the same. That Milan has an extra gear, I think we all knew

"I'm delighted," said coach Johan Cruyff. "We didn't have a brilliant day but we got two points."

There was a similar gulf between the coaches of the top two teams in the French league as second-placed Monaco closed in on leaders Marseille, who were held to a draw.

After Monaco's 2-0 win against St. Etienne Saturday, manager Arsene Wenger said: "We were more enterprising, more explosive, more consistent. That's the way we wanted it. We felt we could be really dangerous."

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Magic leads West to NBA all-stars rout

ORLANDO, Florida (AP) — At long last, it was Magic Johnson's day and the Western Conference's all-star game.

Johnson, after an emotional pregame welcome from National Basketball Association (NBA) all-stars on both teams, showed no rustiness Sunday from the three-month layoff following his shocking announcement on Nov. 7 that he tested positive for the AIDS virus.

In the West's 153-113 rout of the East, Johnson showed all the skill and verve he displayed in a 12-year career that resulted in five NBA championships for the Los Angeles Lakers.

"It's like I'm in a dream right now, and I don't want to wake up," Johnson said. "For one day, I got the NBA back in me and it was great."

He scored 25 points on 9-for-12 shooting, including three straight 3-pointers in the final 2:42 to seal his second most valuable player award.

WINTER OLYMPICS

German turns pretense into gold; Norwegians sweep cross-country race

ALBERTVILLE, France (AP) — German luger Georg Hackl played a game of make-believe in winning Olympic gold Monday while Norwegian skiers, led by "Vegard the Viking," overcame a troll-sized jinx to sweep the 30-kilometre cross-country race at the winter games.

Another Norwegian, Jan Einar Thorsen, jumped into the lead of the men's Alpine combined by winning the weather-delayed downhill portion at Val d'Isere. But Swiss ace Paul Accola was in contending position for Tuesday's slalom portion.

The fairytale landscape of the French Alps received up to 30 centimetres of new snow overnight, forcing a more than two-hour postponement of the men's combined at Val d'Isere and wiping out women's downhill practice at Meribel.

Austria kept up its surprising run on Olympic medals by adding two more to their first-day haul of five. With seven medals, including two golds, the Austrians have four more than their nearest rival — Germany, which has two gold and a silver.

Hackl, silver medalist at Calgary four years ago, started off the third day of the Albertville games by winning the men's single luge event at La Plagne and giving Germany its second gold medal of these Olympics.

To psyche himself up, Hackl pretended he wasn't on a high-speed chase for Olympic gold. Nervous? "Not at all," the 25-year-old German army recruit said after the race. "I tried to take it like in practice."

Hackl widened his first-day lead Monday and wound up with a total time of 3 minutes, 2.363 seconds for the four heats on the 1,250-metre track. He was .306 faster than Markus Prock of Austria, the silver medalist and this season's World Cup champion. Markus Schmidt, another Austrian, won the bronze after finishing .579 off the pace.

On Sunday, Hackl set a La Plagne course record of 45.190 on his first heat Sunday. He posted fastest times in three heats, including both on Monday, when the fresh snow slowed the course.

Defending Olympic champion Jens Muller, who competed for east Germany at Calgary, finished fifth as a member of the new all-German team. Germans now have won six of the eight men's single events since luge became an Olympic sport at Innsbruck in 1964.

At the 1,600-metre high Les Saisies' cross-country course, the Norwegians were jubilant after ending their frustrating 36-year quest for gold in the 30k.

"It was about time. It's wonderful," said Ulvang, who led his team to the medal sweep, the first in an Olympic cross-country event. "I skied a perfect race, absolutely perfect. What a day for Norway."

The 28-year-old World Cup leader battled teammate Bjorn Dæhlie, leader at the halfway point, and finished with a strong kick in 1 hour, 22:27.8 minutes. Dæhlie won silver in 1:23:13.9 and collapsed after crossing the finish line. Countryman Terje Lantlie took bronze in 1:23:42.5.

Chang beats Courier in San Francisco final

SAN FRANCISCO (R) — Second-seeded Michael Chang upset top seed Jim Courier 6-3 6-3 in the final of the \$260,000 Volvo of San Francisco Tennis Tournament, just one day after Courier assured himself of the world's top ranking by reaching the final here.

Courier played sluggishly from the baseline throughout the 98-minute match, missing repeatedly on his powerful groundstrokes. Chang meanwhile stepped up the pace on his serve, scoring seven aces, and played more aggressively than usual from the back court.

Courier replaced Stefan Edberg of Sweden at number one when the weekly ATP Tour computer rankings were released Monday. He will become the first American ranked number one since John McEnroe in August 1985.

The 21-year-old Courier becomes just the third American

player to be top-ranked since the ATP began the computer rankings in 1973, McEnroe and Jimmy Connors being the others.

Courier, who won his second career Grand Slam title at the Australian Open last month, said that the loss in the final did not detract from his taking over number one.

"It's been a very important week for me. I don't know if I played my best tennis, but I came through in a lot of matches. That's the sign of a champion, and even though I couldn't do it today I feel happy with what I accomplished," Courier said.

Chang, who lost just 26 games in five matches on the indoor hard court this week, said that playing more aggressively on both his serve and his opponent's serve helped him become a better player on faster surfaces.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR TUESDAY FEBRUARY 11, 1992

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES: Some obligations could give you trouble if not attended to now as the Moon squares the Sun and Mercury and is in opposition to Pluto. You will need to extend your present interests.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Get into a plan whereby you can get more prosperous with your basic security, after which avoid forcing matters of a worldly nature upon others.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Take suggestions for your advancement from an associate, then you find a secret annoyance can cause you to argue with mate, later conditions work out as you wish.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Accept an opportunity to get a broader view of work potentials, then don't get involved with a friend over money; tonight consult an experienced partner.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) You can extend your creative talents to new boundaries, then don't argue with a partner and a bigwig; later you get much done with fellow associates.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) You can realize a greater degree of physical wellbeing now after which avoid making drastic changes in your life, then you can impress a partner.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Consider ways to make your usual activities much more productive then sidestep a forceful approach at gaining an aim, after which enjoy a good friend.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Delving into all facets of a more comprehensive success for yourself should be done in confidence; then don't go off on an expensive recreation jaunt.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) A highly experienced and purposeful friend will give you the answer you require for headway, then do nothing that can put your families nose out of joint.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Think about what you can do to get a bigwig to show you how to make yourself more successful after which a usual contact can upset your equilibrium.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Going off to a place where you get new ideas with a friend brings most beneficial results but later avoid a tendency to spend too much of your money.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) You can get a message across

to a contact on how you can be helped to gain your progress but then don't argue with an associate over a new plan of action.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) You can make big progress early about home affairs, after which you find it necessary to be careful in dealing with an impulsive associate.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Consider ways to make your usual activities much more productive then sidestep a forceful approach at gaining an aim, after which enjoy a good friend.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Delving into all facets of a more comprehensive success for yourself should be done in confidence; then don't go off on an expensive recreation jaunt.

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THE BETTER HALF

By Harris



"I've always wanted a tattoo!"

JUMBLE

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME by Henri Arnold and Bob Lee

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

MYPT

RAWGE

MIGNIT

KUPHOO

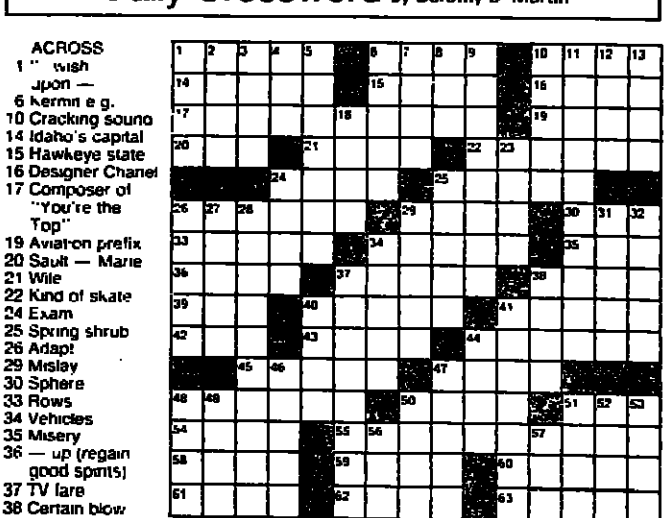
Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Print answer here:

(Answers tomorrow)

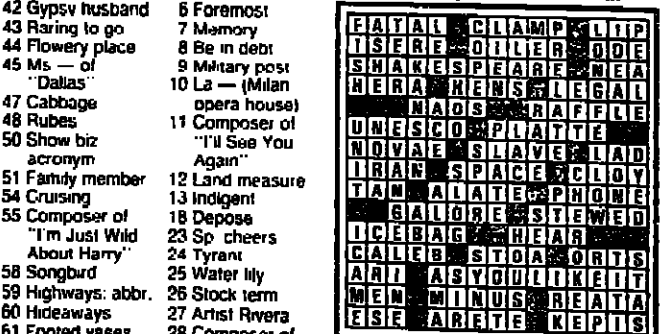
Yesterday's Jumbles: TWICE FANCY PALATE HEIFER Answer: What they should when he last we the first to cross the lush line—WHAT A FEAT!

THE Daily Crossword by Dorothy B. Martin



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Yesterday's Puzzle Solved:



41 That can be marked 49 Glacier edges 50 Encourage 51 Nargate 52 Vegetable 53 Cozy home 56 Shoshonnan 57 Resinous stuff

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TAMMAM HIRSH 1991 Tribune Media Services, Inc.

SPOT THE WINNERS

Both vulnerable. South deals.

NORTH

♠ Q 5

♥ A K Q 2

♦ 10 9 2

♣ 8 7 5 4

WEST

♠ K 10 8 6 3

♥ 9 8 6

♦ 7 3

♣ 6 7

EAST

♠ 9 7 4

♥ J 5 3

♦ A J 9 6

♣ A 2

SOUTH

♠ A 2

♥ 10 5 4

♦ A K 6 4

♣ Q 10 3

The bidding:

South West North East

1 NT Pass 1 NT Pass

2 NT Pass 2 NT Pass

3 NT Pass 3 NT Pass

Opening lead: Six of ♠

When bridge problems are presented for analysis, usually there are a lot of x's to represent the spot cards. More often than not, it makes no difference. But you would have a hard time coming up with the right solution if you did not have the exact spots on this deal.

Both North and South took optimum, though not unreasonable, positions in the auction, and the result was an "illy" game. North's invitation was based largely on the 10-9 in partner's suit, and South was equally enchanted with the ten-third in responder's suit.

West made the normal lead of a low spade, and dummy's queen won. Declarer had seven fast tricks, and even breaks in the red suits would produce the two more needed to fulfill the game. So at trick two, declarer led the ten of diamonds from dummy, intending to duck it to West if East did not cover. When East produced the jack, declarer won the king and noted with interest that West followed with the seven.

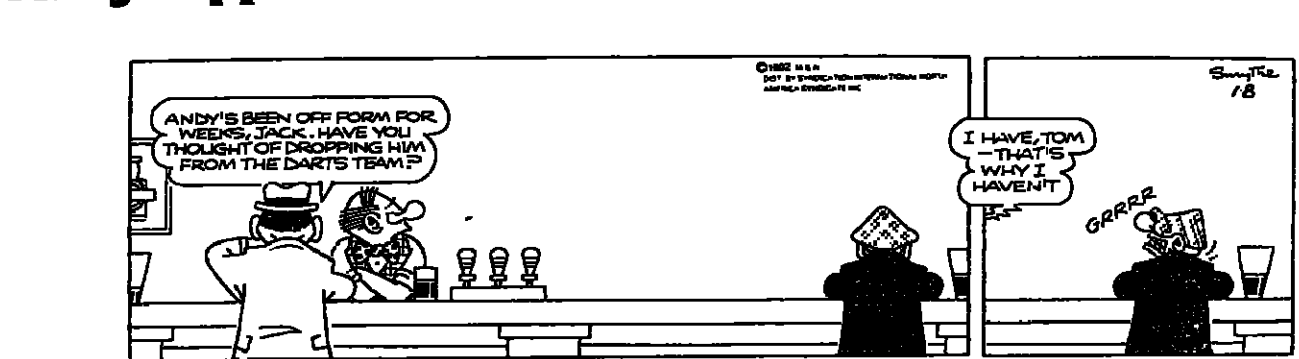
Since declarer wanted to keep East off lead, the table was entered with the queen of hearts and the nine of diamonds was led. Again, East had to cover to prevent declarer from winning a cheap trick, and South's ace won as West contributed the eight.

If you have been following the play carefully, you should have reached the conclusion that declarer can now virtually clinch the contract. West would not follow with the seven and eight of diamonds holding a lower card, so you can bet the ranch declarer is poised with the six-four of diamonds over East's five-three. South reached the same diagnosis, so all that remained was for declarer to cross to the two of diamonds and just cover the two of diamonds with a heart, lead the two of diamonds and just cover the two of diamonds with a heart. Declarer was home with two spades, three hearts and four diamonds.

Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



Planes bringing Western aid to CIS begin arriving

MOSCOW (R) — Planes carrying food and medicine from the West began arriving in cities across the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) Monday as "Operation Hope" got under way to show support for people in their hour of need.

The Japanese delivered 12 tonnes of medicines and food to Khabarovsk in the Far East, destined for a children's hospital and a home for the elderly, according to ITAR-TASS News Agency.

A German plane carrying 100 tonnes of food and medicines arrived at Moscow's international airport from Frankfurt shortly before midday, a spokeswoman at the German embassy said. Five more planes were due later in the day.

The first U.S. military flight carrying supplies left over from the Gulf war was due at 3.45 p.m. (1245 GMT), at Moscow's Sheremetyevo Airport, an American embassy spokesman said.

Altogether 54 U.S. flights over 15 days are scheduled to transport food and medical aid to Commonwealth cities.

Commonwealth and Western officials say the two-week operation, involving nearly 18,000 tonnes of supplies, is of mostly symbolic value since much larger quantities could be sent by land and sea.

Moscow officials recognise the flights will focus attention on their problems. But many have expressed doubts whether a high-

profile airborne operation will give the country the help it needs.

"It is not even quicker than other methods if you are moving large quantities of goods," Russian aid coordinator Alexander Zhitnikov said recently.

The U.S. airlift, coupled with an administration request for congressional approval of an extra \$645 million in aid, was designed in response to criticism that Washington's support for economic reforms launched in the former Soviet Union had been meagre with that of Europe.

Once Washington announced two weeks ago plans for the airlift, European countries joined in and scheduled flights for Monday.

By early afternoon in Moscow, the first U.S. planes had already landed in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan in Central Asia.

The rush to send aid is partly in response to fears among Western leaders that widespread social unrest could erupt in the former Soviet Union, leading to a possible military takeover by the right.

Russian President Boris Yeltsin, in a recent whirlwind tour to the United States and Paris, warned that another cold war could develop if public discontent over food shortages turned violent.

Mr. Yeltsin's ground-breaking reforms have had some success in putting more goods in the shops. But they have led to protests against big price rises and de-

mands for higher wages, pensions and other allowances.

About 10,000 right-wing demonstrators staged a protest in the centre of Moscow Sunday to complain against steep price rises of three to 30 times.

For the West, pleas for aid from the Commonwealth have prompted heated debate over how much should be given and if massive quantities could make a difference.

Some foreign aid, particularly from Germany, has been diverted to the black market since supplies began last year, according to Commonwealth officials.

Germany has already flown more than 300 aid missions to the former Soviet Union in the past year as well as sending hundreds of road and rail shipments.

U.S. Ambassador Robert Strauss, commenting recently on the airlift from Washington, said:

"That's a drop in the bucket. But ... the symbolism is tremendous ... that people do give a damn in the West."

Meanwhile, U.S. Secretary of State James Baker said Monday that rich industrial nations may have to provide billions of dollars to help Russia stabilise its currency.

But that could be done only after Moscow adopts a credible economic reform programme, he said.

He said the United States would push to ensure that Russia

is admitted to the International Monetary Fund in late April when the IMF board meets.

Mr. Baker was talking to reporters on his way to Germany.

He will then visit six newly-independent states and the formerly closed Russian city of Chelyabinsk. Armenia, Azerbaijan and Moldova have been added to an itinerary that previously included only Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan.

In Chelyabinsk, a centre of the secretive Soviet atomic weapons complex, Mr. Baker is to meet Russian nuclear scientists, whom Western leaders fear may be seduced to work for anti-Western states.

U.S. officials say the airlift was largely symbolic because it cannot begin to fill the needs of countries struggling desperately with the transition from communism to capitalism.

Many economists argue that beyond such humanitarian assistance a multi-billion dollar stabilisation fund is essential to help Russia make the leap successfully.

Russia has appealed to rich nations for \$17 billion in aid but U.S. officials say the time is not ripe and the money would be wasted in the absence of tough reforms.

The Washington Post newspaper said Saturday the U.S. administration was discussing the possible creation of a stabilisation fund.

Serb rebel leader facing challenge over U.N. plan

KNJIN, Croatia (R) — A defiant Serb leader in Croatia, facing powerful dissent in his region for blocking a United Nations peace plan for Yugoslavia, prepared Monday to meet his parliament in what could be a make-or-break session.

Deputies from the Serb-dominated Krajina enclave in Croatia Sunday backed U.N. proposals to send peacekeeping forces to the republic in an open challenge to their hardline President Milan Babic.

"The parliament of the Republic of Serbian Krajina yesterday voted to accept the (U.N.) peace plan which practically means the last obstacle for deployment of peace forces has been removed," the Serbian daily Politika said.

But Mr. Babic branded the emergency session illegal and said he had the power to veto its decision.

U.N. officials are waiting for Mr. Babic to lift his objections to the plan so they can deploy 10,000 peacekeepers to battle-scarred areas of Croatia to try to end seven months of fighting.

The head of Krajina's army-backed security forces said Mr. Babic might have no choice but to accept the plan.

"If Babic does not accept it, he will be replaced," Milan Martić told reporters.

"Babic's aim is to bring down the Serbian government, provoke a civil war in Serbia and become leader of all Serbs. He is driven by personal ambition," he said.

Yugoslav Vice-President Branko Kostic and acting Federal Defence Minister General Blagoje Adzic were expected to attend the session in Knjin, Krajina officials said.

Yugoslav and Serbian leaders told the U.N. last week they would guarantee conditions for the deployment of peacekeepers.

Security forces could be seen everywhere in the Krajina capital, Knjin, but the high military presence was normal and the atmosphere in the mountain town was calm.

Many Yugoslavs and Western diplomats consider the U.N. plan the last hope of ending fighting between Croatian militias and Serb irregulars backed by Yugoslavia's federal army.

More than 6,000 people have been killed since Croatia declared independence in June and Serbs in Croatia rebelled.

The president of the Krajina parliament, Milan Paspalj, who called Sunday's emergency session, said Mr. Babic's continued opposition could spark trouble in the enclave, a crescent-shaped area south of the Croatian capital, Zagreb.

"Any further manipulation by the government of Krajina of... deputies and the people of Krajina can provoke serious consequences and victims on the territory of... Krajina," Mr. Paspalj told the Belgrade-based news agency Tanjug.

U.N. officials say they are confident a five-week ceasefire is secure enough for a peacekeeping force to be sent.

ECONOMIC NEWS BRIEFS

Sudan raises air fares by 100-300 %

KHARTOUM (AP) — Sudan Airways increased fares on domestic flights Monday by 100 to 300 per cent after the military government devalued the Sudanese currency. Airline offices refused to sell tickets for international flights until they receive orders from the Bank of Sudan's governor. On Feb. 2, the virtually bankrupt government freed the Sudanese pound, allowing commercial banks to set exchange rates without official intervention. The rate went immediately to 90 pounds to the U.S. dollar from 30 pounds. The regime is selling off public sector companies that are losing money. Sudan Airways is among those offered for sale.

Egypt, Sudan seek to resolve problems

CAIRO (AP) — A senior Sudanese official Monday said Egypt and Sudan are working to resolve their differences, which include a border dispute. The border issue centers on an offshore oil concession the Sudanese sold to a Canadian firm in a Red Sea area claimed by both countries. Maj.-Gen. Al Zohair Mohammad Saleh, Sudan's interior minister and vice president of the ruling junta, told reporters after meeting with President Hosni Mubarak they discussed questions that have "clouded" bilateral ties. "We arrived at some fundamental points in pursuing joint solutions on a solid basis to develop our ties," Gen. Saleh said. He refused to specify what he and Mr. Mubarak discussed. Arriving from Khartoum Sunday, he told reporters he expected talks in Cairo to resolve the dispute over the Halaib frontier area. Both countries claim sovereignty over Halaib, which lies on the Egyptian-Sudanese border along the Red Sea. The dispute became public recently when Canada's International Petroleum Corp. signed an offshore concession agreement with Sudan involving Halaib.

BCCI home depositors to get 40 %

ABU DHABI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Depositors at local branches of the liquidated Bank of Credit and Commerce International (BCCI) will receive in April in initial compensation of 40 per cent of their assets, banking officials said Monday. The bankers, who asked not to be named, said no decision has been made for other payments to the local depositors or those abroad. But they said they expected depositors at the eight UAE branches of BCCI to eventually recover 80 per cent of their assets. As for the other depositors, they might retrieve 30-40 per cent from a compensation pool of \$2.2 billion which liquidators were still negotiating with the Abu Dhabi shareholders. Of the banks 1.3 million worldwide depositors, 35,000 are in the UAE.

EC bans Japanese scallops

BRUSSELS (R) — The European Community (EC) will bar imports of scallops from Japan next month after tests showed they were riddled with toxins that could paralyse anyone who ate them, EC officials said Monday. "This PSP toxin potentially paralyses you," said a spokesman for the EC commission. "We buy several tonnes every year, mainly in France." The 12 EC countries are blocking imports of the delicacy from March onwards and will vet all shipments between now and then, he said. "The levels of the toxin observed can constitute a danger to public health," said a commission statement.

Opening of channel rail tunnel delayed

LONDON (R) — Operators of the multibillion dollar channel rail tunnel between Britain and France said Monday the project's planned opening next year would be delayed. Share market speculation of a postponement had been rife for months, and Eurotunnel finally announced that the project, hit by soaring costs now estimated at almost £9 billion (\$16.5 billion) and construction disputes, would be late. "The current rate of project progress... will not enable the channel tunnel to open for service as intended on June 15, 1993," the Anglo-French Eurotunnel PLC said in a statement. "If the contractors meet programmes for installation and commissioning currently under discussion with them, the tunnel should be able to open at the end of summer 1993 with the launch of Eurotunnel's shuttle services," the company added. Full services would not be under way until mid-1994.

Dollar holds its ground

LONDON (R) — The dollar held its ground up to the European midsession Monday, showing resistance at the start of a new week after dropping sharply Friday following the release of poor U.S. job figures for January. The London Stock Market sprang ahead in late morning after reversing an early fall. Paris turned a small loss into a limited gain but the Frankfurt bourse remained in the minus column. Gold slipped \$1.50 to \$354.90 an ounce. Oil prices were little changed, with the London March futures contract for internationally traded Brent Blend Crude Oil up nine cents to \$18.95 a barrel around 1200 GMT. The dollar traded at 1.5638 marks and 125.61 yen, compared with Friday's late London levels of 1.5615 and 125.15. It edged up in quiet trading as the prospect of a few days without market-moving U.S. economic data prompted precautionary buying, traders said. The currency fell Friday after news that the U.S. economy lost another 91,000 non-farm jobs in January instead of gaining 21,000 jobs as economists had forecast. The continued sluggishness of the world's key economy could prompt further measures by the Federal Reserve, the U.S. central bank, to ease credit. Lower U.S. interest rates would then tend to make investments in the dollar less attractive. But currency traders said this was partly countered by poor German economic data, threatened strikes at German banks and tension in Russia.

COLUMN

School rooms' art turns out to be rare painting

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — A religious painting donated by a lumber baron to a church to decorate its Sunday school rooms has been identified as a rare work by 16th-century Flemish artist Pieter Pourbus. The painting, Abraham And The Angels, has not been appraised, but institute curator George Keyes estimated its value at between \$200,000 and \$300,000. "There are very few Flemish 16th-century paintings of this quality in the United States," said Lynne Ambrosini, assistant curator of paintings at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts. "Pourbus paintings are rare outside the Netherlands or Germany, and this is something that any museum in the U.S. would be thrilled to own." T. B. Walker, an internationally-known art collector who died in 1928, gave the picture to the Hennepin Avenue United Methodist Church. The painting, which depicts biblical Patriarch Abraham with three angels seated around a table in a Flemish village, was identified by Keyes, an expert on Dutch and Flemish art. Museum staff decided it was probably painted between 1565 and 1575, said Joan Gorman, the conservator who cleaned and restored the painting.

Accused thief swallows evidence

BEAVERTON, Oregon (AP) — A diamond may be forever, but digesting one doesn't take that long — and police are willing to wait. A man walked into Smith And Bevell Jewellers in Portland suburb of Beaverton Thursday and asked to look at some loose diamonds. While a sales clerk was distracted, the man pulled a switch — leaving a fake in place of one of the gems, said police spokesman Mark Hyde. Store employees caught him as he tried to leave. Robert W. Hicks, 25, admitted swallowing a 3-carat diamond worth \$4,100. Ms. Hyde said. Doctors examined his throat, but found no jewel. Mr. Hicks, who was accused of theft, was being held in the Washington County Jail. Police said he'll stay there until they can recover the lost loot. "The plan is, each time he has a bowel movement, we go out and search it," Ms. Hyde said. "It could be two to three days before it works its way out. We are letting nature take its course."

Mother pronounced dead heard gasping for air

ST. PETERSBURG, Florida (AP) — A 75-year-old woman declared dead from heart failure was lying inside a body bag, her toe tagged for the morgue when her children arrived at the hospital after an hour later to say their farewells. They found her gasping for air. Emma Brady was listed in critical condition at Palms of Pasadena Hospital, where she was pronounced dead Jan. 24. Dr. Bill Minnix, director of the hospital's Emergency Room Operations, said there was a flat line on Mrs. Brady's heart monitor that day, she had no pulse, was not breathing and no heart beat was detected. "It appears by every indication the patient was clinically dead," Dr. Minnix said. But Mrs. Brady's daughter, Arlene Walsh, said she and her brother, Richard Brady, found their mother wrapped in a plastic bag up to her chest and gulping for air when they were summoned to the hospital. "Her head was going back and she was going 'gasp ... gasp ...'" Mrs. Walsh said last week. "I thought maybe she was waiting for us. I put a hand on her shoulder and said 'Mom, you can go now. Arlene and Dickie are here.'" Mrs. Walsh asked a nurse: "Is this what a dead person is supposed to do?" She said respiratory therapists rushed in as Mrs. Brady shouted, "get this body bag off my mother, she's not dead." Later, as Mrs. Brady heard her children's voices, her eyes started flickering, they said. She was able to blink "yes" and "no" to questions. "I rubbed her fingers and her feet and her toe would twitch. We kept it up. It was like a miracle," said Mrs. Walsh, 52. Mrs. Walsh said her mother later told her: "They wrapped me up like a baby and they were going to take me to the morgue. That night I couldn't breathe. They didn't have to pump on me. All they had to do was give me oxygen. I couldn't talk. I couldn't tell them I was alive."

Rivals plead for calm as more die in S. Africa

JOHANNESBURG (R) — South Africa's two main black groups appealed for calm on Monday after an eruption of township violence which witnesses said killed at least 20 people, including several teenage girls.

In a new twist to the violence that has plagued black townships around Johannesburg for 30 months, residents of one squatter camp said four or five girls aged 12 or 13 were raped and murdered over the weekend.

People in Vlakfontein Camp also told reporters four men were killed in the fighting between followers of Nelson Mandela's African National Congress (ANC) and the Zulu-based Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) of Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi.

Police headquarters said it knew of no killings at the camp, but a Reuters photographer on Monday found the bodies of a girl and a man, shot in the head and with his genitals removed.

Residents said the girl, 13, had been raped and strangled with barbed wire. Police officers stood by her corpse while a resident covered her badly-beaten face with a blanket.

ANC and Inkatha officials pleaded with their followers to stop the bloodshed and honour a September 14 national peace accord signed with the white government and other organisations.

"We're appealing for calm. We must continue to work with the peace accord," said IFP spokeswoman Suzanne Vos.

"We're in a ghastly situation, one leader after another is being assassinated."

ANC spokeswoman Gill Marcus echoed: "It is the responsibility of all organisations and community leaders to make this vio-

lence stop. It will be disastrous if it continues."

Soweto, the biggest township, was quiet on Monday after weekend fighting in which at least nine people were shot, stabbed or burnt to death and several houses set ablaze. Police maintained armoured patrols.

In the east of the country, in Natal Province, state radio reported renewed fighting in Umlazi, with nine people, including prominent Inkatha and ANC leaders, killed.

Scores of people fled the area on Monday following clashes between squatters and hostel dwellers and several homes were razed, the radio said.

About 4,000 people have been killed in townships around Johannesburg and Natal over the past 30 months.

The weekend violence, which included the gunning down of Umlazi IFP leader Winnington Sabelo and ANC official Sikhumbuzo Ngenwa, followed several weeks of relative calm which has accompanied multi-party negotiations on a democratic future.

ANC officials blame a mysterious "third force" which it says strikes just as peace moves begin to gain momentum.

The Natal killings followed a joint ANC-IFP rally the previous weekend — the first meeting of its kind, hailed as a regional breakthrough for peace.

The government of President F.W. de Klerk dismisses allegations that right-wing whites, determined to maintain apartheid, are fomenting violence among blacks. It blames a black power struggle, intensifying with the prospect of blacks getting the vote after 100 years of white supremacy.

Romania local polls show growth of opposition

BUCHAREST (R) — Romania's opposition has emerged from local elections as a credible force to challenge the ruling National Salvation Front (NSF) for the first time since the overthrow of Stalinist dictator Nicolae Ceausescu.

Sunday's polls to elect mayors and councillors passed with minor upsets but without the heavy bloodshed that followed the December 1989 revolution and marked the first free general elections 20 months ago.

An unofficial exit poll conducted by the British Broadcast Corporation in Bucharest indicated the 14-party Democratic Convention (CD) opposition bloc would get up to 40 per cent of the vote, the NSF 30 per cent and the ultra-right Nationalist Romania Mare Party 10 per cent.

They said they expected similar patterns elsewhere in this country of 23 million people which is gradually returning to democracy

after more than five decades of dictatorship under wartime fascists and post-war Stalinists.

Preliminary results are due on Wednesday. Where results were inconclusive, a second round will take place within two weeks.

The elections were viewed as a test of the extent to which Romania had embraced democracy since Mr. Ceausescu was toppled and executed two years ago.

The results will also indicate trends for parliamentary elections due within three months.

Final turnout figures were not immediately available. Officials were still awaiting data from the provinces but expected the total to be between 60 and 70 per cent.

In parliamentary and presidential polls in May last year, the NSF took two-thirds of the vote reflecting its hero-like status in the revolution. The vote for the opposition parties, all running on their own tickets, was small and fragmented.

India mines border in Kashmir to stop march

NEW DELHI (R) — India has laid mines along its frontier with Pakistan to stop a proposed mass march across the border by Muslim separatists fighting for independence in Kashmir, news reports said Monday.

The local government in the Indian-held part of Kashmir said mines were laid at the border on the route of the march planned for Tuesday.

"All arrangements have been made to deal with any possible intrusion," United News of India news agency quoted a govern-

ment spokesman as saying in Jammu, winter capital of the mountainous Himalayan region.

In Pakistan-held Kashmir, the authorities felled trees and built rock barriers on some roads to stop buses carrying Kashmiri activists from reaching Muzaffarabad near the border.

The march has sparked fresh tension between India and Pakistan, who have fought three wars since gaining independence from Britain in 1947. Two of their conflicts were over Kashmir, which both countries claim.

U.S. presidential campaign focus switches to midwest Democrats

DES MOINES, IOWA (R) — The focus of the 1992 U.S. presidential race shifted on Monday to the midwestern state of Iowa where 16 years ago Democrat Jimmy Carter first blazed a trail to the White House.

Iowan Tom Harkin, a U.S. senator and one of five Democrats chasing their party's nomination, is expected to win easily. If he doesn't the result could end his candidacy.

The Republican Party vote in the state is meaningless, with President George Bush expected to get a large majority since neither right-wing commentator Patrick Buchanan nor former neo-Nazi David Duke has bothered to campaign.

Voters will select delegates for next summer's nominating convention. Small meetings of party activists and local officials at firestations, schools and homes will express their presidential preferences.

Party officials predicted 30,000 to 70,000 Democrats would take part, compared to the 120,000 who turned out in 1988 when 11 major candidates were vying for Republican and Democratic votes.

The Iowa vote has been important since 1976, when Mr. Carter emerged from a pack of Democrats and eventually won the pre-

ty nomination and the presidency.

But this year, Mr. Harkin's popularity in the state — he was re-elected to a second senate term in 1990 with 54 per cent of the vote — convinced his four major rivals for the Democratic presidential nomination to cede the state to him.

This left the February 18 New Hampshire primary election, where voters cast direct ballots, as the most important early test of the 1992 campaign.

There Mr. Harkin has been running third or fourth behind Arkansas Governor Bill Clinton, caught up in a sex row, and former Massachusetts Senator Paul Tsongas.

An opinion survey of Mr. Harkin's support shows him slipping in his home state to 54 per cent from 68 per cent in December. Though the other Democrats are ignoring Iowa, Mr. Harkin must make a strong showing in his home state to remain credible in the closely watched New Hampshire voting.

A strong victory in Iowa might give him a boost in the eyes of New Hampshire Democrats, where most voters are still undecided.

Two polls of likely New Hampshire Democratic primary voters show Mr. Tsongas within striking

range of the front-running Mr. Clinton nine days before the leadoff primary.

The Los Angeles Times newspaper reported Sunday that Mr. Clinton had 33 per cent to 28 per cent for Mr. Tsongas in a poll taken Monday through Friday.

A Boston Globe-WBZ-TV poll, taken Wednesday through Friday with additional tracking on Saturday, showed a drop in support for Mr. Clinton each night and a steady rise in support for Mr. Tsongas, the Sunday Globe newspaper reported.

In both polls, Mr. Tsongas trailed by less than the margin of sampling error.

But so many voters in both polls said they might change their minds that the Times called the race for the Feb. 18 primary "fluid" and the Globe said "the state's voters are far from certain whom they will support."

The other three major Democratic candidates had single digits in the Times poll: 9 per cent for Nebraska Sen. Bob Kerrey, 8 per cent for Iowa Sen. Tom Harkin and 7 per cent for former California Gov. Jerry Brown. Eleven per cent were undecided and 4 per cent supported another candidate.

Among likely Republican voters, President Bush led 61 per cent to 30 per cent for conserva-

tive commentator Patrick Buchanan. Seventy-one per cent of Mr. Bush's supporters said they are certain to vote for Mr. Bush compared with 65 per cent of Mr. Buchanan's supporters who said they were certain of their choice.

The Globe poll found Mr. Clinton at 28 per cent. Mr. Tsongas at 25 per cent, Mr. Kerrey at 12, Mr. Harkin at 10, Mr. Brown at 6 and 15 per cent undecided.

Meanwhile, Republican presidential contender Patrick Buchanan said on Sunday he saw a chance for "a tremendous upset" of President Bush in the party's primary election in New Hampshire next week.

"George Bush's army is as hollow as it can be. It is large but it is hollow," said former television commentator Buchanan, who is challenging Mr. Bush for the Republican Party presidential nomination.

"There is a chance for a tremendous upset here," he said on U.S. television as the February 18 election neared.

The vote is the first real test outside opinion polls of Mr. Buchanan's underdog campaign. The vote will choose less than one per cent of the delegates for next summer's nominating convention, but because the national spotlight is on the state, the vote has become important.

A poll of New Hampshire Republican voters released on Sunday found Mr. Bush picking up a little ground against Mr. Buchanan, defeating him by 58 per cent to 28 per cent if the election were held today.

But Mr. Buchanan said his campaign was gaining and that there was still a big group of undecided voters.

Mr. Buchanan said he would not be able to win a majority of the Republican vote. But he noted that ex-Minnesota Senator Eugene McCarthy drove President Lyndon Johnson out of a 1968 election attempt with 42 per cent of the New Hampshire vote.

"If I get close to something like that, we're going to ignite a revolution across this country," he said.

Mr. Buchanan says he is challenging Mr. Bush because the president betrayed conservatives with a 1990 tax hike despite the "no new taxes" pledge and with his signing last year of civil rights legislation that Mr. Buchanan says embraces racial hiring quotas.

He insisted on Sunday that his goal was not simply to push Mr. Bush to the right but to "push him out of office."

"Mr. Bush has been given his three years. He really has not done well," Mr. Buchanan said.